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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 26 AUGUST 2025 | TUESDAY | BENGALURU | 2 RABIUL AWWAL, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 233 | Pages: 8

Free speech has limits when commercialised: SC

Asks Samay, 4 others to apologise on air over disability jokes

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday ruled that commercial and prohibited speech is not protected under the fundamental right to free speech, directing five social media influencers to display unconditional apologies in their shows for mocking persons with disabilities and rare genetic disorders.

The court held that the right to dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution prevails over the right to freedom of speech under Article 19 when the two are in conflict.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said the influencers had ridiculed individuals with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and visual impairment, and stressed that "the degree of repentance should be higher than the degree of offence".

Comedian and YouTuber Samay Raina, known for co-hosting the show 'India's Got Latent', was among the four present in court, while Sonali Thakkar alias Sonali Aditya Desai was absent.

Justice Bagchi said the influencers should be more cautious while creating humour related to different communities especially when it pertains to "apartheid in the society". Justice Bagchi said such humour feeds the influencer's ego and crosses into commerce. "There are various kinds of speeches, commercial and prohibited. In the Amish Devgan case, the court held that such overlapping speech is not protected under fundamental rights," he said.

The court likened the apology to "purging contempt" and asked the influencers to suggest the amount of penalty they are willing to pay, which may be used for treatment of people with SMA.

The case was triggered by derogatory remarks made on Raina's YouTube show. Others named include podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, comics Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh, and Apoorva Makhija. The court had earlier called Allahbadia's remarks "vulgar" and granted him interim protection from arrest.

The matter will be heard further. —*PTI*

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'India's Got Latent' host Samay Raina leaves after appearing before the Supreme Court in New Delhi on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Collegium recommends Aradhe, Pancholi for SC

Supreme Court Collegium recommended Bombay High Court Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Patna High Court Chief Justice Vipul Manubhai Pancholi for elevation to the apex court. With their appointment, the Court will reach its full strength of 34 judges. Justice Aradhe, a senior advocate since 2007, has served in multiple high courts, including as Chief Justice in Telangana and Bombay. Justice Pancholi, a former Assistant Government Pleader in Gujarat, is in line to become Chief Justice of India in 2031 after Justice Joymalya Bagchi's retirement. —*PTI*

SC protects Sanjay Kumar against EC's FIRs

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday granted interim protection from arrest to psephologist Sanjay Kumar in two FIRs filed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) over alleged misinformation on Maharashtra's electoral rolls.

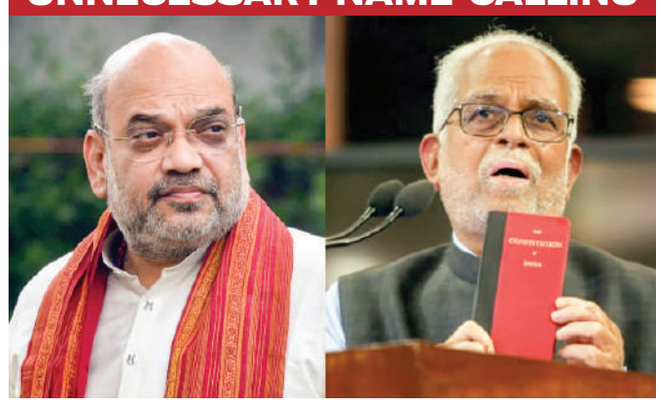
A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice NV Anjaria issued notice on Kumar's plea and directed that no coercive action be taken. Senior advocate Vivek Tankha, appearing for Kumar, said the psephologist had immediately deleted the posts on platform X and issued a public apology.

Despite this, FIRs were lodged at Sarakarvada Police Station in Nashik and Ramtek Police Station in Nagpur, accusing him of misrepresentation, misleading the public, and obstructing public duty.

Kumar, co-director of Lokniti at CSDS, had shared electoral data on 17 August, suggesting abnormal voter count variations between the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly polls.

He later clarified the error was due to a data misreading by his team and had no intent to mislead. —*PTI*

'UNNECESSARY NAME-CALLING'



Union Home Minister Amit Shah; ex-SC judge B Sudershan Reddy

Judges flay Shah for 'Sudershan backs Naxal' barb

NEW DELHI/PATNA, 25 AUG

A group of 18 retired judges, including former Supreme Court justices Kurien Joseph, Madan B Lokur, and J Chelameswar, on Monday criticised Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks against Opposition vice-presidential candidate and former SC judge B Sudershan Reddy, calling them "unfortunate" and a "prejudicial misinterpretation" of the 2011 Salwa Judum verdict.

The judges said Shah's comments risk having a chilling effect on judicial independence. "The judgement nowhere supports Naxalism," they said, urging political leaders to maintain decorum and refrain from "name-calling".

The statement was also signed by former SC justices A K Patnaik, Abhay Oka, Gopala Gowda and Vikramjit Sen, as well as several former high court chief justices and judges. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh praised the judges, calling Shah a "weapon of malicious defamation and mischievous distortion".

Justice Reddy, along with Justice SS Nijjar, ruled in 2011 that the use of tribal youths as Special Police Officers in anti-Maoist operations in Chhattisgarh's Salwa Judum was unconstitutional.

Reddy declined to engage with Shah's remarks, noting the verdict was of a Supreme Court bench, not his alone.

Meanwhile, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad echoed Shah, claiming the judgement reflected Reddy's "inclination towards Maoism" and said the words used in the verdict revealed his ideological leanings. He also questioned the Congress-led INDIA bloc's choice of candidate, pointing out the UPA had previously supported the BJP's stand in the case. —*PTI*

Cong suspends Mamkootathil; to continue as MLA

KANNUR, 25 AUG

Congress leader and Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, facing multiple sexual misconduct allegations, was suspended from the primary membership of the party on Monday. Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Sunny Joseph however, rejected the political opponents' demand for Mamkootathil's resignation as MLA. Joseph also said the legislator has set a "model" by stepping down as youth congress state president without waiting for a formal complaint or a case being lodged. —*PTI*

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BJP yatra protests attempt to 'defame' Dharmasthala

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

The BJP's 'Dharmasthala Chalo Yatra,' launched by its South Bengaluru unit on Monday, drew a large turnout of workers and leaders as the convoy began its journey to the famed temple town under the banner 'Dharmada Ulivige Dharma Yuddha' (A holy war to protect dharma). The Yatra, led by Jayanagar MLA CK Ramamurthy, commenced with prayers at the Sri Vinayaka Temple in Jayanagar 4th Block. Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya and Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya flagged off the journey while Umesh Shetty, Vice President of Bengaluru South district unit, was among the participants. —*PTI*

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India's laser weapon a significant advancement: China

BEIJING, 25 AUG

A top Chinese military expert has called India's successful test of its Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), especially its high-power laser-based Directed Energy Weapon (DEW), a "significant advancement." The multi-layered IADWS, tested off Odisha's coast, includes indigenous QRSAM, VSHORADS missiles, and the laser-based DEW — a capability few nations possess. Wang Ya'nan, editor of Aerospace Knowledge, told Global Times the DEW component was technologically significant, noting only a handful of countries have deployed combat-ready lasers. The test follows the recent Operation Sindoor and China's ongoing military support to Pakistan. —*PTI*

Amid strained ties, India extends helping hand & alerts Pak of flood

ISLAMABAD, 25 AUG

Amid heightened diplomatic tensions between India and Pakistan, New Delhi reportedly extended a lending hand on Sunday and alerted Islamabad about the flood situation in the Tawi River

This marks the first known official contact between the two nations since their four-day conflict in May.

Pakistan's Foreign Office confirmed on Monday that the alert was shared via diplomatic channels on 24 August, rather than through the Indus Waters Commission, as stipulated by the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The 1960 treaty, brokered by the World Bank, governs the use of the Indus River system.

Foreign Office spokesperson Shahfqat Ali Khan underscored India's obligation to fully adhere to the IWT. He criticised New Delhi's decision to suspend the treaty in April, following the Pahalgam terror attack, calling it a breach of international law with potential implications for regional peace.

In New Delhi, sources stated that the warning was issued on humanitarian grounds, despite the IWT being placed in "abeyance". The Indian High Commission in Islamabad reportedly relayed the alert to local authorities.

Pakistan, already reeling from a deadly monsoon season that has claimed over 800 lives, responded by issuing flood warnings, particularly in areas near the Tawi River in Jammu, citing the Indian alert. —*PTI*

The water level of the Tawi river rises after rains in Jammu **PHOTO: PTI**

- In New Delhi, sources stated that the warning was issued on humanitarian grounds, despite the IWT being placed in "abeyance".

PM need not disclose degree: HC sets aside CIC order

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Monday set aside a 2016 order of the Central Information Commission (CIC) directing Delhi University to disclose details of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bachelor's degree, calling such information "personal" and not in the public interest.

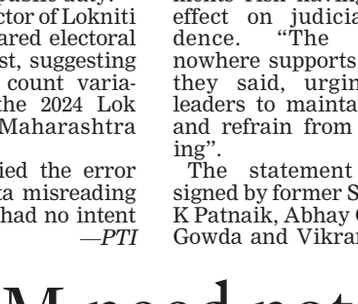
Justice Sachin Datta, allowing DU's plea, ruled that educational records like marksheets and degrees are protected under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, and cannot be disclosed without a demonstrable public interest.

"There is a distinction between what is 'of interest to the public' and what constitutes 'public interest'," the court observed. It said Modi's academic records were not linked to any statutory requirement for holding public office, nor relevant to the discharge of official duties.

- The court reiterated that the RTI Act is meant to ensure transparency in governance, not to "provide fodder for sensationalism".

The verdict followed a 2016 RTI application seeking inspection of records of all students who passed DU's BA exam in 1978, the year Modi reportedly graduated. The CIC had allowed the request, but the HC stayed that order in 2017.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for DU, argued that the university held students' academic information in a fiduciary capacity and objected to "mere curiosity" being treated as public interest. He also clarified that DU had no objection to sharing the record with the court. —*PTI*



We'll bear the pressure: PM on 50% US tariff

AHMEDABAD, 25 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India will not compromise on the interests of farmers, cattle-rearers, and small-scale industries, even as the country faces the threat of 50 per cent US tariffs on Indian imports from 27 August.

"Pressure on us may increase, but we will bear it all," Modi asserted while addressing a gathering in Ahmedabad after launching multiple projects.

He criticised the Congress for making India dependent on imports during its 60–65 years in power, alleging this was done to facilitate "import scams."

Drawing on the symbolism of Lord Krishna and Mahatma Gandhi, Modi said India is walking the path of both "Sudarshan Chakradhari Mohan" and "Charkhadhari Mohan" — representing strength and swadeshi self-reliance.

Referring to Operation Sindoor and alluding to Pakistan, he said, "We do not spare terrorists and their masters, no matter where they are hiding. Operation Sindoor embodied the bravery of our soldiers."

Modi encouraged citizens to adopt swadeshi. "All of us should follow the mantra of buying only 'Made in India' goods. Businessmen should put up boards saying they sell only swadeshi products."

He added, "I think I am fortunate to get the love and blessings of lakhs of people," after holding a roadshow in Ahmedabad. —*PTI*

AFFAIR GONE WRONG

Mysuru man puts chemical powder in lover's mouth, kills her

MYSURU, 25 AUG

A 20-year-old married woman was allegedly killed by a man who was in a relationship with her. He allegedly stuffed chemical powder into her mouth after a heated argument, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on Saturday at a lodge in Bherya village of Saligrama taluk in this district, they said, adding the woman died following consumption of the chemical.

The accused, **Siddaraju**, was arrested, police said, adding he tried to portray the cause of her death as a "mobile blast" to mislead the investigators.

According to police, the victim, **Darshitha**, a resident of Gerasanahalli village sin Hunsur taluk, was married to a man from Kerala and was in a relationship with Siddaraju.

During their stay at the lodge, a heated argument broke out between her and Siddaraju, following which he killed her.

After killing her, he shouted saying that the mobile phone had exploded. However, when the staff came, there was no mobile phone in the room. When the accused was asked about the alleged exploded mobile phone, he claimed that he threw it out of the window, a senior police officer said.

The staff searched for the mobile phone but could not find it and they became suspicious and called the police, he said.

Based on the investigation, the accused Siddaraju was arrested after he confessed to the crime, police said.

A case has been registered at the Saligrama police station in this regard, police said, adding that a further investigation is underway. —*PTI*

Rapido launches 'Bike Direct'; Uber, Ola halt services

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Uncertainty surrounds ride hailing services after the Karnataka High Court clarified it had not authorised bike-taxis operations, prompting Uber and Ola to halt bike operations again. Rapido, however, launched "Bike Direct" on 24 August, describing it as "a lead generation service... provided completely free of cost." The court had earlier asked why bike taxis couldn't be regulated, noting, "Every trade is permissible unless regulated... there are lives at stake." The State government said a decision would be taken at the highest level. The next hearing is on 22 September. —*Agencies*

Banu hits back at BJP over Dasara invite

HM says it's a national festival, not religious; Yaduveer strays from party and backs govt

BENGALURU/ MADIKERI, 25 AUG

Booker Prize-winning author Banu Mushtaq hit back at people criticising the State government's decision to ask her to felicitate the Mysuru Dasara.

"People can say whatever they want. I will speak at the right time and on the right platform," she said. "Why should I respond to every critic? Those who oppose have their right. But when I speak, I will present my words openly and with conviction."

Her remarks come after BJP leader Pratap Simha and expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Yatnal asked why a Muslim was inaugurating a Hindu event.

Home Minister G Parameshwara defended the appointment.

"It is not right to oppose this," he said. "This is not a religious issue. Dasara is a national festival."

However, Opposition Leader R Ashoka said the decision showed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's "Tipu mentality".

Earlier, BJP MLC CT Ravi said it is inappropriate for a person whose faith is uncertain to preside over a religious ceremony while Simha said that Mushtaq can preside over a literary event but not Dasara.

Yatnal wrote on X that "Madam needs to clarify whether she continues to follow Islam, which emphasises belief in only one God and one holy book, or whether she now believes that all paths lead to the same moksha."

However, BJP's Mysuru-Kodagu MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar supported Mushtaq, calling the decision a "progressive and praiseworthy move."

Speaking to press in Virajpet, Yaduveer dubbed Mushtaq a fearless social activist.

"She has fought bravely for the rights of Muslim women, even facing social boycott for demanding equal access to mosques," he said. "She has enriched Kannada language and literature with her progressive voice. Choosing such a writer as Dasara inaugurator is commendable."

The erstwhile Mysuru royal family member dismissed his party compatriot's comments.

"This is a secular nation," Yaduveer stated. "The government's celebration of Dasara is not a religious ritual. Worship belongs in homes, not public festivals. I see no reason to oppose this decision."

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Indian lawyer, activist, and International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: SALAR

BIO ENERGY MEET

KSBDB Chairman SE Sudheendra met Consul General Vibha Kant Sharma and Consul Bhupendra Nikhurpa in Frankfurt, discussing Indo-German cooperation, bioenergy initiatives, and investment opportunities

C'ballapur:2 held for strangling woman to death

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Two people were arrested for strangling a woman to death for her jewellery in Chikkaballapur. Archana, the deceased, was found dead by locals in Namagondlu village in Chikkaballapur on 17 August. The Manchenahalli police registered a case and found suspicious links to an auto driver named Rakesh. During interrogation, Rakesh confessed to the crime, leading to the arrest of his friend Anjali. Police said that the accused picked up Archana on the premises of going to Isha foundation. On the way, they strangled her to death for her jewellery and disposed her body. —*PTI*

GANESHA HABBA RUSH

KR Market is packed as people gather to buy idols and flowers on the eve of the Gowri-Ganesha festival, which is on Wednesday **PHOTO:**

BJP takes out its 'Dharmasthala Chalo Yatra'

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

The BJP began its 'Dharmasthala Chalo Yatra,' launched by its South Bengaluru unit on Monday, drew a large turnout of workers and leaders as the convoy began its journey to the famed temple town under the banner 'Dharmada Ulivige Dharma Yuddha' (A holy war to protect dharma).

The Yatra, led by Jayanagar MLA CK Ramamurthy, commenced with prayers at the Sri Vinayaka Temple in Jayanagar 4th Block.

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya and Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya flagged off the journey while Umesh Shetty, Vice President of Bengaluru South district unit, was among the participants.

"Participated in the flag-off of BJP Bengaluru South unit's Dharmasthala Chalo Yatra today at the Link Road junction, NICE Road. Dharmasthala... is a victim of an organised conspiracy," Surya said on X.

After reaching the temple town of Dharmasthala in Dakshina Kannada district, leaders were scheduled to walk a kilometre to the Lord Manjunath Swamy temple to offer prayers and meet temple Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade to express the BJP's "complete support to the holy shrine".

"Why did CM (Siddaramaiah) show so much urgency (in constituting an SIT)?" Surya told press. "Would he have shown similar urgency to constitute an SIT if certain allegations of this nature were made against a non-Hindu institution? Over the last couple of days we are told that instructions to constitute the SIT specifically came from a few Delhi leaders. The CM must tell who these Delhi leaders were."

Surya claimed there was a network which funded the complainant and that there was no inquiry into his background. "Who funded, orchestrated, and handled this entire conspiracy?"

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya speaking during the rally **PHOTO: SALAR**

JD(S) SHOWS SOLIDARITY IN MYSURU

JD(S) launched its own car rally, led by MLA Sa Ra Mahesh from Mandya to Mysuru to protest the issue. Nearly 500 cars participated in the rally.

BJP MARCHES IN BIDAR

The BJP Mandal unit organised a massive protest in Aurad town in Bidar district. Former Minister and Aurad MLA Prabhu B Chavan inaugurated the march as party workers, leaders, and members of various organisations formed a human chain.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Parameshwara says no to NIA probe

MYSURU, 25 AUG

Home Minister G Parameshwara said that the probe into the Dharmashtala mass burials case could not be handed over to the NIA.

"Who are we to dictate to the SIT on how to investigate the case?" he told press in Mysuru. "I cannot decide if a narco-analysis test is needed or not. The SIT is investigating properly."

He added that he cannot set a deadline for the SIT. "How can we dictate to them to finish the to finish the investigation in this or that much time?"

He defended the SIT team and said there was no need to NIA and urged the BJP not to politicise the issue. —*Salar News*

CM flags police lapses in SC/ST cases, asks cops to step up

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: X@SIDDARAMAIAH**

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that chargesheets have been submitted to courts in only 64 per cent of cases registered under Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. He directed officials to ensure that they are henceforth filed within the 60 day time period.

Charing a meeting of the State-Level Awareness and Monitoring Committee meeting for Scheduled Castes/ Tribes on Monday, he said, "Police should not make any excuses. There are injunctions in 56 cases in the courts, and steps must be taken to clear these."

Devadasi rehabilitation plan, with special grants, will be taken once the government completes its survey

Siddaramaiah noted that the conviction rate was only a dismal 10 per cent for such cases.

"If it is found that police are colluding with the accused strict action will be taken against them," he said.

Siddaramaiah noted there were serious delays from the administrations side.

> **The government has noted an increasing trend of registering complaints in atrocity cases. In such cases, a visit to the site must be conducted, and an FIR should be filed only if the complaint is found to be genuine after verification**
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

"From 2023 a total of 6,635 cases have been registered. Chargesheets have been filed in 4,912 cases, with only 4,149 cases having charge sheets submitted within 60 days. Only 63 per cent of the total registered cases have had charge sheets filed within 60 days. Only 36 cases have resulted in conviction," he said.

The Chief Minister said that the government was also considering increasing medical compensation provided to people rendered disabled in atrocities cases.

Siddaramaiah also said that strict action must be taken in the case of fake caste certificates. —*Salar News*

Guv launches 'Griha Shuddhi Abhiyan' to tackle child trafficking

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot inaugurated the "Griha Shuddhi Abhiyan," an anti-human trafficking and parenting awareness programme organised by the Indian Nurses and Allied Union at Raj Bhavan on Monday.

Gehlot described the initiative as a parent-and-child protection awareness campaign aimed at addressing challenges faced by school-going children and curbing incidents of abduction and exploitation.

Expressing concern over the vulnerability of children in India, where nearly 40 per cent of the population is under 18, the governor said "incidents of child abduction remain alarming."

"Even in a progressive state like Karnataka, such incidents continue to be a challenge," he said. Gehlot said that more than 2,000 children are reported missing in State annually, with nearly 10 per cent never traced. Most victims are girls, he claimed, warning of suspected links to trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour, organ trade and forced begging.

Acknowledging the efforts of law enforcement, the Governor said both the Centre and the State have set up special task forces. —*PTI*

DKS must apologise for singing RSS anthem: Cong MLC

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Congress MLC BK Hariprasad has demanded an apology from State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar for singing the RSS anthem in the State Assembly, questioning, "Whom is he trying to please?" Hariprasad said, "No one will object if he sings the RSS anthem as deputy chief minister... but he is not supposed to sing it as the Congress state president." He added, "It's not proper to sing the prayer of an organisation that killed Mahatma Gandhi."

Shivakumar sang the anthem on 21 August during a discussion on the Chinnaswamy Stadium stampede that killed 11 people. Hariprasad criticised him further, saying, "He has many faces... He may be this one also (RSS worker)." He stressed Congress must not compromise on ideology.

Minister HC Mahadevappa defended Shivakumar: "He has only asserted that he too is a Hindu... Congress will continue to fight against that ideology." Mahadevappa condemned extremism and said, "Any organisation, including the RSS, that is harmful to democracy and the Constitution must be opposed."

Mysuru MLA Tanveer Sait said singing the anthem "does not mean he is in favour of the BJP." —*PTI*

Govt body urges GST slab rationalisation

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

The Karnataka Hosiery and Garment Association on Monday urged the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council to rationalise tax slabs on garments and hosiery items and bring petroleum products under the indirect tax regime.

Sajjan Raj Mehta, chairman of the association's taxation committee, in said in a statement addressed to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and GST Council members a 5 per cent GST across all garments and hosiery products would provide a level playing field for MSMEs and organised players.

The body also pressed for inclusion of petroleum products under GST, noting that petrol, diesel, and other fuels outside the tax framework lead to cascading taxes and higher input costs across industries.

While acknowledging potential revenue losses for states, Mehta suggested that a rationalised GST framework with a broader tax base could eventually boost compliance and collections, and recommended phased transition support until revenues stabilise. —*PTI*

BIMS DOES IT AGAIN

Instead of tumour, docs remove intestine

BELAGAVI, 25 AUG

Government run Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS) landed in more trouble after its doctors removed the lower intestine of a man instead of a tumour from his stomach.

The patient, Mahesh Madar, was admitted in the hospital with severe abdominal pain on 20 June. Doctors operated on him the same day and he was discharged a few days later.

However, even after the operation, the pain in his abdomen did not subside. He then approached a private hospital in Belagavi where medical tests showed his lower intestine was removed instead of the tumour.

Mahesh's tumor was later removed in the KLES Hospital for which his family had to incur a medical expenditure of Rs 20 lakh.

He now suffers from a lot of physical pain and discomfort. BIMS director Ashok Kumar Shetty said that a probe is being conducted into the incident and a report would be send to the Health and Medical Education Department. Several people and organisations had protested against the BIMS for 20 maternal deaths, alleging negligence of the medical staff of the hospital earlier this year. —*Salar News*

'KGF', 'Kantara' actor Dinesh Mangaluru dies

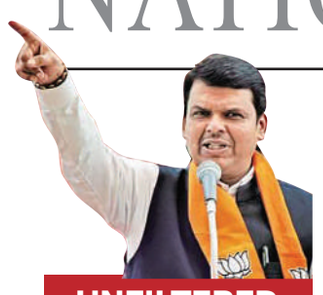
UDUPI, 25 AUG

Veteran Kannada actor and art director Dinesh Mangaluru, passed away at 55 on Monday at his residence in Udupi of the State after a prolonged illness, family sources confirmed.

Hailing from Mangaluru, Dinesh began his career in the Kannada film industry as an art director, earning praise for his meticulous craftsmanship before making a successful transition to acting. Family members said he was under treatment for some time, but his condition worsened recently.

Dinesh gained prominence with his portrayal of Sitaram Shetty in 'Aa Dinagalu', which marked his breakthrough as a character artist. He later became widely known for his role as the 'Bombay Don' in 'KGF', which further cemented his popularity among audiences.

He appeared in a wide range of films, including 'Kantara,' 'Inthi Ninna Preethiya', 'Ricky', 'Harikathe Alla Girikathe', 'Ulidavaru Kandanthe', and 'Slum Bala'. His ability to lend authenticity and depth to supporting roles made him one of the most respected figures in the industry. Colleagues remembered him as a humble and dedicated professional. —*PTI*



UNFILTERED

Rahul Gandhi is a serial liar. He has been spreading lies relentlessly ... Unless they realise that to win the votes of people, one has to go to the people and earn their trust, their lies are only meant to convince themselves

-Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra Chief Minister

ST panel seeks report on Surya Hansda's death

GODDA, 25 AUG

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has requested a report from Jharkhand Police over the death of Surya Hansda, who was "wanted" in multiple criminal cases, in an alleged encounter. An eight-member team visited Godda district to investigate, meeting Hansda's family and local residents. The police claim Hansda attempted to escape custody, snatching a rifle and firing at officers, leading to his death However, opposition figures and locals suggest he was a social activist, alleging a "well-planned conspiracy" to eliminate him.—*PTI*

Revanth bats for lowering age to contest polls to 21

HYDERABAD, 25 AUG

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has called for reducing the minimum age to contest Assembly elections from 25 to 21. Speaking at Osmania University, he argued, "People at 21 become IAS and IPS officers and are administrating as district officials. Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar gave us the Constitution with voting rights at 21." He questioned, "Why was the voting age lowered to 18 but not the contesting age?" Emphasising the need for "young leadership", he said 65% of Telangana's population comprises youth. Reddy also criticised a "malicious campaign" about "lions and elephants" in the university, promised to restore its prestige.—*PTI*

Sule flags omission of beneficiaries in Ladki Bahin Yojana

PUNE, 25 AUG

NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule has alleged a Rs 4,800 crore scam in Maharashtra's Ladki Bahin Yojana and demanded a white paper and probe. "Around 25 to 26 lakh names have been removed... nearly two lakh from Pune. On what parameters were these names omitted?" she asked. She said even men had enrolled: "Was the government unable to differentiate?" Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare confirmed, "Data shows 26 lakh ineligible beneficiaries across districts. Verification is on." Sule said, "I will file a PIL and request a CAG report if no action is taken.—*PTI*

Delhi police to provide security to CM Rekha Gupta

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Centre has withdrawn the Z-category CRPF security cover for Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, days after it was provided following an attack on her. Her security has now been handed back to Delhi Police. Gupta, 51, was assaulted on August 20 during a 'Jan Sunwai' at her Civil Lines camp office. Her office described the attack as part of a "well-planned conspiracy to kill her." The Union Home Ministry had instructed the CRPF VIP security wing to extend protection under Z-category protocol. However, the orders for withdrawal were issued instead of the earlier plan to extend the security. the police detained two suspects, including prime accused Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimji, an auto-rickshaw driver from Rajkot, Gujarat, as part of the probe.—*PTI*

PM included self in bill to sack jailed netas: Shah

Shah denied rumours on Dhankhar being under house arrest

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday defended the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi has included himself in its provisions — a move he contrasted with past leaders like Indira Gandhi. The bill proposes that any Prime Minister, Union Minister, or Chief Minister arrested and held for over 30 days in a case carrying a minimum five-year sentence must vacate office on the 31st day.

Speaking to ANI, Shah said, "PM Modi has brought a constitutional amendment against himself. If the Prime Minister goes to jail, he will have to resign. This is the standard he has set for democratic accountability."

He dismissed Opposition protests labelling the bill as a "black law," questioning, "Can a Prime Minister or Chief Minister run a government from jail? Will the jail become the PM or CM's residence? Will top officials take orders from a prison cell? This is unacceptable."

Shah added that the bill does not interfere with the majority enjoyed by any government. "When the person is out on bail, they can take oath again. What's the objection?" he asked. Slamming the disruption in Parliament, Shah asserted, "A constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority. There is space for debate and dissent. But is it democratic to not even allow a bill to be presented?"

He clarified that the bill would be sent to a joint committee of both Houses, where all parties can express their views. Shah also denied rumours about former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar being under "house arrest," saying he resigned due to health reasons, as clearly stated in his letter.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal responded sharply, accusing Shah and the BJP of plotting to remove him from the Delhi Chief Minister's post.

"If a leader includes serious criminals in their party and makes them ministers, should they resign?" Kejriwal posted on X. —*PTI*

Union Minister Amit Shah dismissed Opposition's protest labelling the Bill as 'black law' ***PHOTO: PTI***

- Shah added that the bill does not interfere with the majority enjoyed by any government. "When the person is out on bail, they can take oath again. What's the objection?" he asked.

On Dhankhar's 'house arrest'

We shouldn't make a fuss out of all this. Dhankhar held a constitutional post and discharged his duties as per the constitution. He resigned due to personal health reasons. One should not deliberate much on the issue

On Rahul's viral reels on social media

They (Congress) want to create a kind of illusion among the people...After losing three elections, I think the level of frustration is such that the normal sense of judgment, he (Rahul Gandhi) has lost it

On his bail in encounter case

I stayed outside for two years because in the history of India, no one's bail application has ever lasted for two years. With the grace of Aftab Alam (SC judge), my bail application lasted for 2 years. At the most, the bail application lasts for 11 days

TMC MLA arrested in WB 'job scam'

KOLKATA, 25 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate arrested ruling Trinamool Congress MLA Jiban Krishna Saha on Monday following raids as part of its probe into alleged irregularities in the hiring of teachers and staffers in schools in West Bengal.

He was arrested following searches conducted at his residence in West Bengal's Murshidabad district.

The MLA reportedly tried to escape from his house during the raids by jumping from a wall. He also threw his phones into a drain, which were recovered later.

Videos and pictures of the raids showed a drenched MLA being taken away by the ED and accompanying CRPF officials from an area marked by vegetation and trash lying around.

The MLA from the Burwan Assembly segment has been arrested for non-cooperation with the agency. Some of his relatives and associates were also raided.

Though Saha was arrested by the CBI in 2023 in the scam, he was later released.

The Calcutta High Court had directed the CBI to probe into the case.

The ED had earlier arrested former West Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee and TMC MLA and ex-president of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education Manik Bhattacharya among others in the case.

A total of four chargesheets have been filed by the ED in this case till now.

The TMC alleged that Saha's arrest was part of "vendetta politics" by the BJP. —*PTI*

TMC MLA Jiban Krishna Saha at Bankshall Court after being arrested by ED in alleged irregularities in the hiring of teacher in West Bengal ***PHOTO: PTI***

- The MLA from the Burwan Assembly segment has been arrested for non-cooperation with the probe agency. Some of his relatives and associates were also raided by ED in the case.

Mamkootathil suspended from Congress, but will continue as MLA

KANNUR, 25 AUG

Congress leader and Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, facing multiple sexual misconduct allegations, was suspended from the primary membership of the party on Monday.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Sunny Joseph however, rejected the political opponents' demand for Mamkootathil's resignation as MLA.

Joseph also said the legislator has set a "model" by stepping down as youth congress state president without waiting for a formal complaint or a case being lodged.

The veteran leader didn't specify the duration of the suspension period.

The Congress considered the allegations as 'serious'.

The Congress leadership in Kerala took the decision after making a series of consultations with various leaders.

He refused to answer on an internal inquiry and cyberbullying against party MLA Uma Thomas, allegedly carried out by Congress activists supporting Mamkootathil.

Mamkootathil was accused Malayalam actress Rini Ann George of misbehaviour. Several women and a transgender person accused him of sexual harassment. —*PTI*

INCITING VIOLENCE

Swapna, George chargesheeted for plot against Pinarayi

T'PURAM, 25 AUG

The Crime Branch wing of the Kerala Police has filed a charge sheet against the key accused in the sensational gold smuggling case Swapna Suresh and BJP leader P C George for allegedly conspiring to incite violence by raising allegations against Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in 2022.

According to Crime Branch officials, the charge sheet was filed against Swapna and George at the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Thiruvananthapuram last week.

The case was first registered at Thiruvananthapuram Cantonment Police Station in June 2022, following a complaint lodged by Thavanur MLA K T Jaleel after Suresh made allegations about the Chief Minister's involvement in the 2020 gold smuggling incident.

The LDF legislator had also alleged that BJP leader George was part of the conspiracy behind Swapna's allegations against Vijayan, Crime Branch sources said.

The case was registered for criminal conspiracy and wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause a riot under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Later, the case was taken over by the Crime Branch unit in Thiruvananthapuram. —*PTI*

P C George, Swapna Suresh, Pinarayi Vijayan ***PHOTO: PTI***

- The case was first registered at Thiruvananthapuram Cantonment Police Station in June 2022, following a complaint lodged by Thavanur MLA K T Jaleel after Suresh made allegations about the Chief Minister's involvement in the 2020 gold smuggling incident.

Aspirants stage a protest demanding reform in the recruitment process of the Staff Selection Commission at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on 24 August ***PHOTO: PTI***

Clash ensues as cops use force against SSC protesters

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Clashes broke out at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on Sunday night, after over a thousand Staff Selection Commission (SSC) aspirants and teachers staged a protest against alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations. Following intervention by the police, over 40 protesters were detained.

Political parties slammed the Delhi Police on Monday for allegedly using force against Staff Selection Commission (SSC) aspirants protesting at Ramlila Maidan, even as the police denied claims of baton charging the demonstrators.

The Congress slammed the Centre over the alleged "lathi charge", with Rahul Gandhi alleging the Modi government was not concerned about youths' future as it has come to power by "stealing votes". In a post in Hindi on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "The brutal lathi charge on SSC candidates and teachers who were peacefully protesting at Ramlila Maidan is not only shameful but also the hallmark of a cowardly government."

Former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia posted a video on X in which police personnel were seen pushing a protester and dragging another. "At Delhi's Ramlila Maidan, the BJP's 'Lathi-Leela'. Brutal baton charge on SSC students and teachers, dragged them away forcefully. When it comes to providing jobs, the Modi government ranks last, but when it comes to lathi-charging youth, it is number one," he said.

In the wake of the protests, a statement issued by the Delhi Police which said, "Around 1,500 protesters gathered at the Ramlila (Maidan), of which 100 refused to leave after the permitted time despite multiple requests. 44 of them were detained." —*PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Rabuka after their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi ***PHOTO: PTI***

India, Fiji forge defence ties

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

India and Fiji on Monday firmed up a broad action plan to expand their defence ties following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's extensive talks with his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka.

India and Fiji may be oceans apart, but our aspirations sail in the same boat, Modi said.

Prime Minister Modi also said that India and Fiji support a free, inclusive, open, secure and prosperous India-Pacific.

Rabuka arrived in Delhi on Sunday in his first visit to India as the Prime Minister of the South Pacific nation.

Fiji is an important nation for India in the sphere of maritime security. India has been looking at expanding its defence ties with Fiji against the backdrop of China's relentless efforts to expand its strategic heft in the Pacific region.

The two countries inked seven pacts to broadbase cooperation in a range of areas.

India would provide training and equipment to strengthen Fiji's maritime security.—*PTI*

Pooja Pal ***PHOTO: PTI***

Fired MLA Pal accuses Akhilesh of shielding mafia

LUCKNOW, 25 AUG

Expelled Samajwadi Party MLA Pooja Pal on Monday wrote to party chief Akhilesh Yadav accusing him of shielding criminals and saying she fears the "SP-sponsored mafia" might get her killed.

The three-time MLA and widow of murdered BSP MLA Raju Pala also said that the SP's policies are dangerous for social harmony and alleged that the party "continues to nurture criminals, a sin future generations will not forgive".

Pooja Pal was expelled by the SP for "breach of discipline" after she had praised Uttar Pradesh Assembly Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's crackdown on the mafia."My husband was gunned down in broad daylight when the SP was in power. Even after this the SP fielded Atiq Ahmad's brother Ashraf against me in three elections. —*PTI*

LAST FLIGHT

The Indian Air Force's iconic MiG-21 fighter jets made their final operational flights at Nal Air Base, Bikaner, ahead of a formal farewell on 26 September. Air Chief Marshal AP Singh flew solo sorties, marking an emotional end to the jet's 62-year service. The MiG-21 played key roles in the 1965, 1971, Kargil wars, and downed a Pakistani F-16 in ***PHOTO: PTI***

'CENTRE HATCHING CONSPIRACY TO STOP RATIONS TO 55L'

CHANDIGARH, 25 AUG

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday charged the BJP-led Centre with "hatching a conspiracy" to stop free rations to 55 lakh people in the state, and asserted that he would not let people's rights be "snatched".

In a written message addressed to the people of Punjab, he alleged that the Central government has issued an order that the free rations to 55 lakh people in the state will be stopped. This is the second time within a week that Mann has accused the Centre of stopping the rations being given to people under the National Food Security Act.

Bhagwant Mann ***PHOTO: PTI***

However, Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi has already rejected Mann's allegations, accusing the Punjab government of trying to "spread lies".

On Monday, Mann alleged the BJP government at the Centre has decided to stop free ration for 55 lakh people.

Mann claimed that since July, the Central government had stopped providing ration to 23 lakh underpriviledged people across Punjab by saying that they have not completed the e-KYC process. —*PTI*

Odisha airport cafe serves tea, water for just Rs 10

BHUBANESWAR, 25 AUG

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched the Udaan Yatri Café at Biju Patnaik International Airport, providing travellers with budget-friendly food and beverages. Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, alongside MoS Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol, inaugurated the facility, reflecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make air travel accessible through the Udaan scheme. Kinjarapu said the initiative addressed those concerns. The first such café was in Kolkata, with subsequent openings in Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Pune. Bhubaneswar is the fifth location, with plans to expand further. At the café, a bottle of water and a cup of tea cost Rs 10 each, alongwith a samosa priced *—PTI*

YouTuber Jyoti's judicial custody extended till 3 Sept

HISAR, 25 AUG

A Hisar court has extended the judicial custody of YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra until 3 September. Malhotra, who runs the channel 'Travel with JO', hails from Hisar, appeared before the court, who remanded her to custody. She was arrested on 16 May at New Aggarsain Extension and booked under the Official Secrets Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Her bail plea was rejected, with police opposing it due to ongoing investigations. Police stated no evidence linked her to military or defence secrets, though she was in contact with Pakistani intelligence operatives, including Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish, a Pakistani High Commission staffer since November 2023. Danish was expelled for alleged espionage. *—PTI*

PHOTO: Instagram

Actor Tannishtha Chatterjee battling stage 4 cancer

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Actor Tannishtha Chatterjee has been battling stage 4 oligometastatic cancer for the past eight months. In an emotional Instagram post, the 44-year-old, known for films like 'Parched' and 'Brick Lane', wrote: "As if losing my father to cancer was not enough. 8 months back I got diagnosed with stage 4 oligometastatic cancer." Sitting on a sofa with her shaved head, she described her diagnosis as a message of love and strength. She praised her friends and family for their unwavering support, saying: "... I discovered an extraordinary kind of love... their empathy and presence are bringing life back." Other notable works include 'UnIndian', 'Angry Indian Goddesses', and 'Anna Karenina'.*—PTI*

Parineeti, hubby Raghav announce pregnancy

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra and politician Raghav Chadha announced on Monday that they are set to become parents. They shared an Instagram picture of a cake with "1+1=3" written on it, captioning: "Our little universe...on its way. Blessed beyond measure." The couple, who married in Udaipur in 2023, revealed their joyful news publicly. Chopra's recent work includes 'Amar Singh Chamkila' with Diljit Dosanjh, and she is currently filming a Netflix series alongside Tahir Raj Bhasin, directed by Renzil D'Silva. Chadha, a Rajya Sabha MP of the Aam Aadmi Party, expressed his happiness. Fans and well-wishers have extended their congratulations to the couple as they prepare to welcome their first child.*—PTI*

SC asks govt to frame rules for social media content

SC says humour is part of life, but sensitivity is needed

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

PHOTO: Screengrab

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to intervene and instructed Attorney General R Venkataramani to draft comprehensive guidelines for regulating social media content, with inputs from all stakeholders. This comes amid backlash over five influencers mocking people with disabilities and rare genetic disorders.

Venkataramani told the court that while the government is in the process of formulating such guidelines, a "gag order" was not being considered. Justice Surya Kant agreed, stating that draft guidelines should be publicly shared for feedback.

"There must be accountability. Today it's disabled people, tomorrow it could be women, children, or senior citizens," said Justice Kant.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi added, "Humour is part of life, but laughing at others, especially vulnerable groups, requires sensitivity. We're a country of varied communities."

The bench said the proposed guidelines must focus on sensitisation and fixing responsibility. It also pulled up comedian Samay Raina for an affidavit attempting to defend his actions before offering an apology. The court exempted the influencers from further personal appearances, provided they display their apologies prominently in their shows.

Senior advocate Aprajita Singh, representing NGO Cure SMA Foundation of India, said all five influencers had tendered unconditional apologies. She stressed that both the Information Technology Rules and the Cinematograph Act prohibit targeting persons with disabilities.

Singh suggested that the influencers use their platforms to raise awareness about rare genetic disorders like spinal muscular atrophy (SMA).

Justice Kant further called for proportionate penal action under existing laws to protect the dignity of vulnerable communities.

The court made it clear the guidelines should not be a knee-jerk reaction to this case but a broader, structured framework to prevent future misuse of digital platforms.

Influencers named include Raina, Vipul Goyal, Balraj Paramjeet Singh Ghai, Sonali Thakkar, and Nishant Tanwar. *—PTI*

FULL OF PROMISES

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla received a rousing welcome as he returned to his hometown Lucknow after his Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station. At his alma mater, City Montessori School, he urged students to join India's Moon mission, but warned of tough competition for crew spots. "Work hard and we will compete together," he said, inspiring laughter and cheers **PHOTO: PTI**

2 held for firing at Youtuber Elvish Yadav's home

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Delhi Police has arrested two men allegedly affiliated with the Himanshu Bhau gang in connection with a recent firing incident outside the residence of YouTuber Elvish Yadav.

The accused, Gaurav and Aditya, were apprehended by the police near the Shahbad Dairy area in Delhi during a planned operation following a tip-off.

After the firing, a purported post on Instagram surfaced in which the Bhau gang took responsibility for the attack.

Both accused were being interrogated to ascertain the motive behind the attack and to identify others involved in the conspiracy.

A case has been registered and further investigation is underway, a police official said. *—PTI*

Satveer Bhatia and Rohit Bhatia after their arrests in the murder of Nikki, who was burnt alive over dowry demands in Noida **PHOTO: PTI**

Noida dowry murder: Brother-in-law, father-in-law held

NOIDA, 25 AUGUST

The father-in-law and brother-in-law of Nikki Bhati, the 26-year-old woman who was allegedly burnt alive over dowry demands in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, have been arrested.

The accused, identified as Satveer Bhati, 55 and Rohit Bhati, 28, were arrested near Sirsa Toll Chauraha following a tip-off. Nikki's husband Vipin Bhati and his mother, Daya, 55, were arrested on 23 August. Vipin was shot in the leg while trying to flee.

A case was registered against them under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Nikki was allegedly beaten and then set on fire by Vipin and her in-laws at their home in Sirsa village in Greater Noida.

Disturbing videos of the assault, recorded by Nikki's elder sister Kanchan, who is married into the same family, circulated widely on social media.

Nikki had moved back to her parent's home about six months ago after she was assaulted by Vipin. She returned to him after he vowed not to hit her before a panchayat meeting. He was also against her running a salon along with Kanchan and posting reels on Instagram.

Nikki's family alleged she faced years of torture and escalating dowry demands since her marriage in 2016. They had complied with their demands, which later increased to Rs 36 lakh and a luxury car.

Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar asked the Uttar Pradesh police to submit a detailed action taken report within three days along with providing protection for the victim's family and witnesses. *—PTI*

SC appoints amicus over HP 'ecological imbalance'

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to appoint an amicus curiae to assist it in a matter over the ecological imbalance in Himachal Pradesh.

The court heard a suo motu case over the ecological and environmental conditions in the state.

On Monday, Himachal Pradesh's advocate general and additional advocate general informed about a report being filed by the state on 23 August.

The top court posted the matter after four weeks.

The top court while dealing with a petition against a Himachal Pradesh High Court order on a plea challenging the state's notification declaring certain areas as "green area", had said the state might "vanish in thin air" if the situation did not change.

It stressed on taking the opinions of geologists, environmental experts and locals before undertaking construction projects in the state.

It directed the apex court registry to register a writ petition in public interest on the matter.

Meanwhile, heavy rains on Monday, prompted the closure of schools and colleges in Himachal's eight districts, while 685 roads remained closed for traffic. *—PTI*

Op Sindoor: Ashoka prof gets SC relief

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Ali Khan Mahmudabad **PHOTO: PTI**

- On July 16, the top court questioned Haryana SIT's line of investigation in the case, saying "it misdirected itself". On May 21, the top court granted him interim bail, but refused to stay the investigation against him.

The Supreme Court on Monday restrained the trial court from taking cognisance of the chargesheet filed by Haryana SIT in the FIR against Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, who was booked for social media posts on Operation Sindoor.

The court also restrained the trial court from framing any charges in the case.

The SIT informed that it had that filed a closure report in one of the two FIRs against Mahmudabad, while filed a chargesheet in another after it was found that some offences were made out.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mahmudabad, said they have booked him under sedition charges, whose validity is under challenge.

The court asked Sibal to go through the chargesheet against Mahmudabad and prepare a list of the alleged offences. It said it would consider his submissions on the next date of hearing.

The top court directed for quashing all the proceedings related to the case.

On July 16, the top court questioned Haryana SIT's line of investigation in the case, saying "it misdirected itself".

On May 21, the top court granted him interim bail, but refused to stay the investigation against him.

Haryana Police arrested Mahmudabad on May 18 after two FIRs were registered against him.

His contentious social media posts on Operation Sindoor, it is alleged, endangered the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

The two FIRs -one based on a complaint by the chairperson of the Haryana State Commission for Women , Renu Bhatia and the other on a complaint by a village headman were lodged by the Rai police in Sonipat district. Several organisations condemned his arrest. *—PTI*

'Death sentence can be challenged under Article 32'

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Article 32 of the Constitution empowers the court to reopen sentencing in cases of capital punishment on grounds of breach of procedural safeguards, the Supreme Court said on Monday while agreeing to hear a death row convict's plea.

Nagpur's Vasant Sampat Dupare was convicted of raping and killing a four-year-old in April 2008. He lured her with chocolates and crushed her head with stones.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta noted that there had been a breach of procedural safeguards. It also cited the 2022 Manoj Vs Madhya Pradesh judgment that mandated psychological evaluation before awarding death to a person. *—PTI*

9 dead, 42 hurt as truck hits tractor-trolley in UP

BULANDSHAHR, 25 AUG

Nine people were killed and 42 injured when a truck rammed into a tractor-trolley carrying pilgrims in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district early Monday.

Two of the deceased were minors. Three are on ventilator support.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each for the injured.

The accident took place at 2.10am on the Bulandshahr-Aligarh border, when the canter truck hit the tractor-trolley from behind, causing it to overturn, Senior Superintendent of Police (Rural) Dinesh Kumar Singh said."The tractor-trolley was carrying 61 people, who were travelling... for a pilgrimage," he said. The bodies of thedeceased will be handed over to their families. *—PTI*

Police personnel speak with the people who were injured in the accident in Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Tamil Nadu hydrocarbon project faces opposition

CHENNAI, 25 AUG

Political parties and fishermen from Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram and Kanyakumari districts have opposed hydrocarbon exploration.

Thangam Thennaras **PHOTO: PTI**

Following protests, the Tamil Nadu government directed the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority to revoke the clearance given to ONGC for drilling 20 onshore wells.

Environmentalist Ku Bharathi highlighted reserves of 30,000sq km of shallow sea and 95,000sq km of deep-sea areas near Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, identified by Union Petroleum Ministry. He warned the project would impact 608 fishing villages, threatening livelihoods amid fisheries depletion.

Fishermen and opposition parties like MDMK, led by Vaiko, demanded the project be scrapped due to environmental hazards it poses. PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss warned of groundwater contamination and earthquakes. Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu affirmed the state's opposition. He said it was the policy of Chief Minister MK Stalin to safeguard the welfare of the people. *—PTI*

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

M'rashtra couple dies after liver transplant

PUNE, 24 AUG

A woman who donated a part of her liver to her husband died days after he died following a transplant surgery, prompting the Maharashtra health department to issue a notice to a private hospital in Pune.

The Sahyadri Hospital was directed to submit all details pertaining to the transplant procedure by Monday, deputy director of health services, Nagnath Yempalle.

The patient, Bapu Komkar and his wife Kamini, who donated a part of her liver, underwent surgeries on 15 August.

Bapu passed away on 17 August after his health deteriorated. Kamini developed an infection on 21 August and died during treatment.

Kamini Kaomkar had donated a part of her liver to her husband Bapu Balkrishna Koamkar **PHOTO: PTI**

Their family members have alleged medical negligence and demanded an inquiry into the deaths.

The hospital stated the surgeries were conducted as per the standard medical protocols and that patient had many complications.

The hospital said that a living donor liver transplant was one of the most complex procedures and that the family and the donor were fully counselled about surgical risks in advance.

Unfortunately, the recipient developed cardiogenic shock after the transplant and could not be revived despite all efforts.

On Kamini Komkar's health, the hospital said she initially recovered well, but later developed septic shock and multi-organ dysfunction, which could not be controlled even with advanced treatment.

The hospital said that it would provide the highest standards of care and extend our full support to the bereaved family. *—PTI*

FARMERS SEEK FAIR TRADE & JUSTICE

Hundreds of farmers from different parts of the country started gathering at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday to attend a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' organised by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha. They will deliberate on the long-pending demand for a legal guarantee to minimum support price (MSP) for all crops, agriculture, dairy, poultry and fisheries sectors be kept out of any proposed agreement with the US, and withdrawal of police cases registered against farmers during the agitation against the now-repealed farm laws. ***PHOTO: PTI***

150 tribal groups say govt undermining gram sabhas

More than 150 tribal rights groups and civil society networks have written to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs demanding immediate withdrawal of recent guidelines and advisories, which they claimed undermine the authority of gram sabhas under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

In a joint representation dated 21 August, the signatories claimed that interventions by the ministry were "subverting the democratic framework of governance, management and conservation of community forest resources as recognised and established under the Forest Rights Act, 2006".

They alleged the measures promoted a "parallel institutional structure for community forest resource management" that replaced gram sabha-led governance with a "techno-bureaucratisation scheme that consolidates powers in the hands of the forest department and environment ministry".

The groups objected in particular to the "Guidelines for Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Community Forest Resources" issued on September 12, 2023.

According to them, these replaced the 2015 guidelines, which had explicitly recognised the gram sabha's authority. The 2015 directions had empowered gram sabhas to "freely and autonomously develop, decide and implement the plan" for community forest resources.

In contrast, the 2023 guidelines, they claimed, "contravene this core idea by undermining the institutional authority of gram sabha and its democratic governance framework".

Among the concerns listed were provisions asking gram sabha meetings to be convened by the panchayat secretary, mandating coordination of the CFR management committee with the forest department, creating a separate district-level CFR monitoring committee and authorising officials to issue letters for opening bank accounts of gram sabhas.

They claimed the ministry is 'subverting the democratic framework of governance, management and conservation of community forest resources as recognised and established under the Forest Rights Act, 2006' ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

"The CFR management is reduced to a scheme under the oversight of the bureaucracy rather than the bureaucracy functioning under the oversight of the institution of democracy, in this case, the gram sabha," the submission read.

The organisations also opposed the joint advisory issued on 14 March, 2024, by the tribal ministry and the environment ministry.

The advisory, they claimed, reproduced the 2023 guidelines and proposed "model scientific CFR management plans, in consonance with the Working Plan Code 2023" to be developed with the forest department's support.

According to the signatories, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) became the nodal ministry for FRA implementation after the 2006 amendment to the Government of India (Allocation of Business Rules), 1961, and it alone has the authority to issue directions and clarifications under the law.

"By declaring and adopting the principle of joint responsibility on matters of FRA, MoTA, in effect, abdicated its responsibility in violation of the law," the joint representation claimed.

It also claimed the environment ministry and state forest departments "have proactively violated forest laws regarding recognising forest rights when notifying forests and protected areas and also diverting forests for non-forest purposes, which alone necessitated the enactment of the FRA to address this long-standing historic injustice".

The submission alleged that MoTA was now allowing the environment ministry to encroach upon its statutory mandate. Citing an example, the groups pointed to a letter issued by the Chhattisgarh forest department on 15 May, claiming itself to be the nodal agency for implementation of community forest resource rights, citing the 2024 joint advisory.

The order, later stayed after protests, had said no plan other than the environment ministry-sanctioned working plan could be implemented in forest areas.

The groups said this episode showed how "these CFR guidelines and joint advisories have further generated conflicts on the ground and emboldened the forest department to obstruct implementation of FRA and impinge upon the authority of a gram sabha".

The representation further opposed the inclusion of FRA activities under the PM-JUGUA mission launched in September 2024, claiming that it turned FRA into "a beneficiary scheme".

The entire mission, they said, "has transformed the Forest Rights Act into a techno-managerial and bureaucratic exercise where the powers of gram sabhas have been circumvented by creation of parallel institutional structures".

Calling MoTA's actions "irresponsible, injudicious and disappointing", the groups demanded that the ministry withdraw the September 2023 CFR guidelines and the March 2024 joint advisory, and reinstate the 2015 guidelines, which upheld gram sabha authority.

They asked the ministry to assert its nodal powers under the FRA, direct states that any clarifications on forest rights must come only from MoTA and ensure the environment ministry and its institutions are held accountable for violations.

The submission has been endorsed by 151 organisations and individuals, including the Campaign for Survival and Dignity, Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch, All India Forum of Forest Movements, Gondwana Ganatantra Party, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Himdhara Collective and actor and documentary filmmaker Suhasini Mulay. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

China's rules on rare earth supply seal its monopoly

China released new interim measures on Friday tightening controls on mining and processing of rare earths that are used in many high-tech products including electric vehicles, smartphones and fighter jets.

The rules released Friday by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology apply both to rare earths originating in China and those that are sent to China for refining.

They require companies to comply with quotas for various minerals. Companies must have government approval to deal with rare earths and must accurately report the amount of rare earths products being handled. Violators will face legal penalties and also have their quotas for rare earths reduced.

Here's what to know.

Why China has tightened controls on rare earths

The 17 rare earth elements, including such minerals as germanium, gallium and titanium, aren't actually rare. But they're hard to find in a high enough concentration to make mining them worth the investment. China has been gradually tightening restrictions on exports of such materials, partly in response to US controls on its access to American advanced technology.

In April, just after US President Donald Trump announced a raft of tariffs on dozens of US trading partners, Beijing announced permitting requirements for seven more rare earths: samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium and yttrium, citing the need to "better safeguard national security and interests and to fulfill global duties of non-proliferation."

- Those limits raised worries that manufacturers in the US and elsewhere would run short of vital materials needed for production, an issue in China-US trade talks.

Those limits raised worries that manufacturers in the US and elsewhere would run short of vital materials needed for production, an issue in China-US trade talks.

In response to US concessions on access to computer chip design software and jet engines, Beijing announced in June that it was speeding up approvals of rare earths exports.

In July, China's Ministry of State Security said it was cracking down on alleged smuggling of rare earths materials that it said threatened national security, indicating Beijing was moving to exert more control.

China's dominant role in the rare earths sector

Over the past several decades, China has come to dominate rare earths processing. It now supplies nearly 90 per cent of the world's rare earths, even though it mines only about 70 per cent of such materials.

China holds nearly half of the world's known reserves of rare earths, but it also imports significant amounts of rare earths from neighbouring Myanmar for processing and export.

Since it controls technologies used for refining rare earth elements and has banned exporting that know-how, China holds a near-monopoly on smelting and separating them.

In 2024, the United States obtained 70 per cent of the rare earths it used from China; 13 per cent from Malaysia; 6 per cent from Japan and 5 per cent from Estonia. Some of the elements obtained from non-Chinese intermediate sources came from mineral concentrates processed in China and Australia, according to the US Geologic Survey.

The impact of the new rules on rare earths trade is unclear

China has agreed to issue some permits for rare earth exports but not for military uses, and much uncertainty remains about their supply.

The rules released Friday spell out tighter controls on licensing of companies dealing in rare earths and centralise controls on mining, exports and processing. They also impose more stringent environmental standards for the industry.

Trump has made it a priority to try to reduce American reliance on China for rare earths, while pushing for Beijing to ease its controls.

China has opted to dial up or down the approval process as needed, while tightening overall controls on the industry.

The new regulations don't spell out the quotas for production and export or specific rare earths elements, but strongly suggest Beijing is serious about exerting stronger control over the industry. *—PTI*

In response to US concessions on access to computer chip design software and jet engines, Beijing announced in June that it was speeding up approvals of rare earths exports ***PHOTO: XINHUA***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

It's 'diamond rush' in Andhra: Villagers turn into fortune hunters

The early rains in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh have turned into a season of fortune seeking for farmers and villagers in Kurnool and Anantapur districts, where hunting for precious stones, including diamonds, has intensified alongside kharif cultivation.

Rain-washed lands in Jonnagiri, Tuggali, and Peravali mandals, long known for diamond discoveries, are drawing crowds of villagers, traders, and outsiders eager to test their luck this season.

"Even if you pick a stone, it may turn your fortunes," Bharat Palod, an entrepreneur from Mahabubnagar district in Telangana, told PTI, adding that stories of ordinary farmers turning millionaires and billionaires fuel widespread interest in the region.

Palod said the precious stone hunting has changed his life. "I found my first piece in 2018 and this year I sold one for Rs 8 lakh," he said.

Deepika Dusakanti, a social worker, recalled how she previously sold a diamond for Rs 5 lakh to fund education of underprivileged children.

"This year's discovery worth Rs 10 lakh will again go for students' benefit," she mentioned.

Naman, an archaeology student, said, "I came to study Telugu history. I found stones that will both fund my studies and serve research purposes," he told PTI.

A farmer from Chittoor, Godavariamma, said she travelled to Jonnalagiri after watching videos of diamond discoveries. "Though I came late, I will continue searching. If I find one, it will support my family's needs," she said.

Kurnool DIG Koya Praveen said folklore about diamonds in Kurnool and Anantapur districts persists.

"People migrate for work, return during the monsoon, and harvest diamonds. No crimes have been reported despite high sums involved," Praveen told PTI. He said that villagers claim the lands as their own and sometimes resist outsiders entering, yet 'no major disputes or criminal incidents' have been reported so far.

This season, reports of multiple high-value diamonds have renewed excitement.

Venkateshwara Reddy, a farm worker in Peravali village, reportedly sold a diamond for Rs 15 lakh to a local trader. P Bajranglal, owner of the land in Anantapur district, said he owns over 40 acres where villagers search for diamonds, as many have found precious stones, and he has no objections.

He mentioned that his family even provides water and food for people who come in search of diamonds. "If these diamonds bring happiness to others' lives, I fully support it," he said.

Rain-washed lands in Jonnagiri, Tuggali, and Peravali mandals, long known for diamond discoveries, are drawing crowds of villagers to test their luck ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Srinivasulu, another farmer from Maddikera mandal in Kurnool district, discovered a rare diamond which was said to have been sold for Rs 2 crore to a trader syndicate, making headlines across the region.

Officials noted this as the most valuable diamond discovered so far this year.

In Tuggali mandal's Lower Chintalkonda village, Prasanna, a woman farmer, found a shiny stone while ploughing her agricultural fields. After tense negotiations, she sold it for Rs 13.5 lakh to a local trader.

Villagers said the sale brought cheer not just to her family but to the entire village, inspiring many others to resume digging in rain-washed fields.

Diamond hunts traditionally peak during the rainy months in Jonnagiri, Pagidirai, Erragudi and Upparlapalli regions of Rayalaseema as heavy rains expose buried stones, which are spotted by those combing black soil fields.

Despite some success stories, most villagers return empty-handed after days of digging and yet, the occasional jackpot keeps thousands motivated to try their luck every year.

Farmers and locals alleged that syndicates frequently exploit them by offering low prices for stones, citing doubts about quality or threatening possible legal action to force down rates.

- The early rains in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh have turned into a season of fortune seeking for farmers and villagers in Kurnool and Anantapur districts, where hunting for precious stones, including diamonds, has intensified alongside kharif cultivation.

The early rains in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh have turned into a season of fortune seeking for farmers and villagers in Kurnool and Anantapur districts, where hunting for precious stones, including diamonds, has intensified alongside kharif cultivation.

In recent years, some locals have resisted syndicates by holding small public auctions or advertising their finds on social media, thereby securing better deals.

Authorities don't regulate sales, while locals insist that the government should intervene to ensure fair pricing and protect villagers from exploitation.

"This is our seasonal livelihood. If the government can fix a minimum price for agricultural produce, why not for diamonds?" Srinivasulu questioned.

Officials acknowledged that the trade occurs informally and without a regulatory framework, making government involvement difficult. Still, calls for a system of checks are growing stronger.

The region's diamond culture is steeped in history. Folklore traces diamond discoveries back to centuries ago, when diamonds found in Rayalaseema reportedly made their way into royal treasuries of Vijayanagara kings.

Even today, many villagers describe diamond hunting as part of their seasonal rhythm. After months of migration for work, families return home during the rains to try their luck.

Officials noted that villagers treat the activity like "diamond farming." They spend hours digging, washing soil, and combing through stones in hopes of uncovering the prized gems.

Farmers argue that exploitation remains rampant even when valuable stones are sometimes purchased at low prices and resold for huge profits. Despite concerns, diamond hunting remains a unique seasonal tradition of Anantapur and Kurnool districts. Unlike regular farming, it is driven by chance, faith, and persistence in harsh terrain.

For now, the activity remains largely unorganised, carried forward by hope and folklore. With each monsoon, these districts once again transform into a hub of diamond seekers chasing hidden fortunes. *—PTI*

US comedian Reggie Carroll shot dead in Mississippi

LOS ANGELES, 25 AUG

American comedian Reggie Carroll, renowned for his stand-up routines, has died aged 52 after being shot in Southaven, Mississippi, on 20 August. Despite resuscitation efforts, police confirmed he was dead. A man has been arrested and charged with his murder. The police released a statement, saying, "One male is in custody and has been charged with the murder of Reggie Carroll. Our thoughts are with the family of Mr. Carroll... Thank you to the community for their patience and understanding." *—PTI*

'The Sopranos' star Jerry Adler dies at 96

NEW YORK, 25 AUG

Actor Jerry Adler, best known for his role as Herman 'Hesh' Rabkin in 'The Sopranos', has passed away at 96. The Brooklyn-born actor died in his sleep on Saturday, his family said. Although Adler's fame grew with his TV role, he had a long career behind the scenes as a stage manager, supervisor, and director on over 50 Broadway productions. His notable theatre work included 'My Fair Lady' (1956), 'Annie' (1977), and 'Camelot' (1980). Adler began acting later in life, making his debut in 1992's 'The Public Eye'. He was also in 'The Good Wife', 'Mad About You', and 'Curb Your Enthusiasm'. His last Broadway role was in 'Fish in the Dark'. *—PTI*

Don threatens to revoke ABC, NBC's media licences

WASHINGTON, 25 AUG

US President Donald Trump attacked leading American media organisations ABC and NBC, claiming they gave him "97 per cent" negative coverage and should therefore have "their licenses revoked". "Why is it that ABC and NBC FAKE NEWS, two of the absolute worst and most biased networks anywhere in the World, aren't paying millions of dollars a year in license fees?" Trump wrote on Truth Social. "They should lose their licenses for their unfair coverage of Republicans.... but at a minimum, they should pay up BIG." His anger stemmed from the networks reporting that Trump had a low approval rating, contradictory to Trump's assertions. *—Salar News*

Indian restaurant in London set on fire; 2 held

LONDON, 25 AUG

At least five people were injured in a suspected arson attack on an Indian restaurant in east London. A 15-year-old boy and a 54-year-old man were arrested.

The Metropolitan Police said officers responded to the Indian Aroma restaurant in Ilford on Friday night. Three women and two men, believed to be dining at the restaurant, suffered burns. Police said that a man and a woman remain in life-threatening condition.

CCTV footage showed three masked people walking into the diner and throwing a liquid on the floor, when the restaurant was packed. Soon, flames engulfed the room. BBC said it took firefighters 90 minutes to extinguish the fire.

"While we have made two arrests, our investigation continues at pace so we can piece together what happened on Friday evening," said Detective Rogers of the Met Police's Central Specialist Crime North unit.

This comes in the backdrop of rising hate crimes in the UK and Ireland. *—Salar News*

5 journalists among 20 killed in Israel attacks

IDF bombs hospital killing Al Jazeera, AP, Reuters scribes

DEIR AL-BALAH, 25 AUG

An Israeli strike on a hospital in southern Gaza killed five journalists and dozens of civilians on Monday, including a freelancer who worked for The Associated Press, a photojournalist with Reuters news agency, and photojournalist with Al Jazeera.

In all, 19 people were killed in the strike on Nasser Hospital, according to Zaher al-Waheidi, head of the Health Ministry's records department.

Mariam Dagga, the AP journalist has a 12-year-old son who was evacuated from Gaza earlier. Dagga based herself at Nasser, most recently reporting on the hospital's doctors struggling to save children from starvation.

Al Jazeera confirmed that its journalist Mohammed Salama was also among those who were killed in the Nasser strike. Reuters reported that its contractor cameraman Hussam al-Masri was killed and its contractor photographer Hatem Khaled wounded.

The Israel-Hamas war has been one of the bloodiest conflicts for media workers, with at least 192 journalists killed in Gaza in the 22-month conflict, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Comparatively, 18 journalists have been killed so far in Russia's war in Ukraine, according to the CPJ

Journalists Mariam Dagga; Mohammed Salama; Hussam al-Masri; Ahmed Abu Aziz; and Moaz Abu Taha
PHOTO: ALJAZEERA

GROUND OPERATIONS INTENSIFY

Israeli air and ground forces carried out heavy strikes on the eastern and northern outskirts of Gaza City overnight Saturday and into Sunday, demolishing buildings and homes as troop reinforcements were sent to the north.

Residents reported explosions throughout the night. Tanks targeted houses and roads.

The IDF has stated that its forces are preparing for a major offensive aimed at seizing full control of Gaza City.

TOLL RISES TO 6 IN YEMEN

Israeli airstrikes rocked Yemen's capital on Sunday, killing 6 people and injuring at least 86 others. Israel said the attack was a retaliation for the cluster bomb, the first since 2023, that the Houthi rebels launched towards Jerusalem.

'WILL WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON AFTER HEZBOLLAH DISARMED'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed the Lebanese cabinet's "momentous decision" earlier this month to work towards the disarmament of Hezbollah by the end of 2025. He said that if Lebanon takes the necessary steps to disarm Hezbollah, then Israel will respond with reciprocal measures, including a phased reduction of the Israeli military presence in southern Lebanon. *—Agencies*

France summons US envoy over antisemitism claims

PARIS, 25 AUG

- Charles Kushner, father-in-law of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, claimed "public statements haranguing Israel... embolden extremists"

France has summoned the US ambassador, Charles Kushner, after he wrote to President Emmanuel Macron alleging France's insufficient action against antisemitism. The French foreign ministry described his claims as "unacceptable" and announced Kushner must appear at the Foreign Affairs Ministry on Monday.

The White House did not immediately respond, but State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott stated, "Ambassador Kushner is our US government representative in France and is doing a great job advancing our national interests." The ambassador's summons is a formal sign of displeasure.

Kushner, a real estate developer and father-in-law of Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law, claimed that "public statements haranguing Israel and gestures toward recognition of a Palestinian state embolden extremists, fuel violence and endanger Jewish life in France." He urged Macron to "enforce hate-crime laws without exception, ensure the safety of Jewish schools, synagogues and businesses... and abandon steps that give legitimacy to Hamas and its allies."

France dismissed these allegations, stating "France firmly rejects these claims" and that authorities have "fully mobilised" to combat rising antisemitic acts since Hamas's attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. France hosts around 500,000 Jews, about 1per cent of the population. *—PTI*

DC now has gun-weilding Nat'l Guards

WASHINGTON, 25 AUG

National Guard units patrolling Washington DC have started carrying firearms, an escalation of US President Donald Trump's military deployment.

A Defence Department official said some units on certain missions would be armed — some with handguns and others with rifles. The spokesperson said that all units with firearms have been trained and are operating under strict rules for use of force.

The Guard was making good of a directive issued Friday by Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth.

The exact number of troops who would carry their weapons was fluid, but they will either carry their M17 pistols or M4 rifles.

TRUMP THREATENS BALTIMORE

Trump threatened to expand his military deployments to more Baltimore.

Trump made the threat during a spat with Maryland Governor Wes Moore, a Democrat who has criticised Trump's unprecedented flex of federal power. Moore last week invited Trump to visit his state to discuss public safety and walk the streets.

This angered Trump, who wrote on Truth Social that Moore asked "in a rather nasty and provocative tone".

Moore said he invited Trump to Maryland "because he seems to enjoy living in this blissful ignorance" about improving crime rates in Baltimore.

TRUMP CLAIMS 'VERY BAD' CRIME RECORDS

"Wes Moore's record on Crime is a very bad one, unless he fudges his figures on crime like many of the other Blue States' are doing," Trump wrote.

Trump has said Chicago and New York are most likely his next targets.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that the Pentagon has spent weeks preparing for an operation in Chicago that would include National Guard troops and potentially active-duty forces. *—PTI*

Hegseth authorizes National Guard to carry arms in DC ***PHOTO: X***

TRUMP'S NEXT TARGETS. FYI, ALL ARE DEMOCRATS

Baltimore	Democrat Mayor	Washington DC	Democrat Mayor
Chicago	Democrat Mayor		
Los Angeles	Democrat Mayor		
New York	Democrat Mayor		

All the targeted cities have Black Mayors, while Maryland also has a Black Governor

Trump claims 'purge' in S Korea before meeting its Prez

WASHINGTON, 25 AUG

President Donald Trump greeted Lee Jae Myung, the new President of South Korea, by claiming that there was a "Purge or Revolution" there and threatening to not do business with Seoul as he prepared to host the new leader at the White House later Monday.

It was not clear what Trump was referring to, but South Korea had been in a state of political turmoil for the last several months after its former leader, Conservative Yoon Suk Yeol, briefly imposed martial law last December which eventually led to his stunning ouster from office.

"What is going on in South Korea? Seems like a purge or revolution. We can't have that and do business there," Trump posted on Truth Social Monday morning.

Prior to the post, the meeting was expected to flesh out the July trade deal, where South Korean was tariffed 15 per cent. Trump has threatened 50 per cent tariffs on Brazil over its case against former Conservative President Jair Bolsonaro. *—Salar News*

Vietnam evacuates lakhs as typhoon Kajiki nears

HANOI, 25 AUG

Vietnam has evacuated hundreds of thousands of people and closed schools and airports as it braces for Typhoon Kajiki, its strongest storm of the year so far.

Forecasters said the typhoon had winds of up to 166kmph at 10am Monday but is expected to weaken slightly before making landfall between central Vietnam's Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh provinces later in the afternoon.

Vietnamese state media reported plans to evacuate nearly 600,000 people in the provinces of Thanh Hoa, Quang Tri, Hue and Danang, where more than 152,000 homes are in high-risk areas.

The government said over 16,500 soldiers and 107,000 paramilitary personnel have been deployed to assist with evacuations and remain on standby for search and rescue.

Kajiki has already caused devastation in China, with strong winds and heavy rain whipping Hainan Island and nearby parts of Guangdong province on Sunday. About 20,000 people were evacuated from high-risk areas, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported.

One man in Nghe An province died Friday after being electrocuted while trying to secure his roof ahead of the storm.

The storm is expected to move inland into Laos and northern Thailand. *—PTI*

166 kmph was the speed of the winds Monday morning

Vietnam evacuates tens of thousands from coastal areas as Typhoon Kajiki makes landfall ***PHOTO: X***

Thousands of Rohingyas from Myanmar living in Bangladesh camps marked 8th anniversary ***PHOTO: ROHINGYA HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE***

Rohingya refugees in B'desh want safe return

COX'S BAZAR, 25 AUG

Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in dozens of camps in Bangladesh marked the eighth anniversary of their mass exodus, demanding a safe return to their previous home in Rakhine state.

The refugees gathered Monday in an open field at a camp in Kutupalong, in the Cox's Bazar district in southeastern Bangladesh, the site of a large refugee camp. They carried banners reading "No more refugee life" and "Repatriation the ultimate solution." They were marking what they called "Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day."

"We want to go back to our country with equal rights like other ethnic groups in Myanmar," one of the protesters, 19-year-old Nur Aziz said.

Bangladesh's interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, urged the international community to facilitate a process for their safe return as he addressed a three-day conference on the Rohingya that began a day earlier in Cox's Bazar.

International dignitaries, United Nations representatives, diplomats and Bangladesh's interim government discussed supporting refugees and how to speed up the repatriation process.

Yunus said the "relationship of Rohingyas with their homeland cannot be severed.... Their right to return to their homeland has to be secured." *—PTI*

Chinese Telegram scandal: 1,000s of nudes leaked

BEIJING, 25 AUG

A scandal has erupted in China after a private Telegram channel called "Mask Park Treehole Forum" was found sharing intimate photos and videos of women.

The channel, with over 1,00,000 subscribers, was accessible only through VPNs. Many smaller Chinese-language channels on Telegram continue to operate. One victim, Ms D, in her 20s, revealed her private content was leaked by her ex-boyfriend, who admitted sharing it with three people.

She suspects the leak spread further, with evidence showing her social media details and intimate videos circulating. The channel featured images of countless women, including minors and relatives of perpetrators.

Ms D said, "It's like they're verbally raping women... and they're even fantasising about family members."

She exposed the channel online, triggering public anger over women's online and offline safety. Campaigners have since disbanded the channel, shared reporting tips, and raised slogans like "no investigation, no kids," warning they may refuse children if authorities don't act. *—ANI*

TO FAST-TRACK DECISIONS

UK sets up new body for asylum appeals

LONDON, 25 AUG

A new independent body will be set up to speed up decision making on asylum appeal cases, the UK government announced. The aim of the move laid out this week will be to overhaul the system to speed up decision-making on whether a refugee has the right to be granted asylum in the UK.

This is aimed at accelerating returns of those not entitled to asylum and ending hotels to house asylum-seekers awaiting a final decision on their appeals, an issue that has attracted large protests and counter-protests in parts of the country.

"We are determined to substantially reduce the number of people in the asylum system as part of our plan to end asylum hotels," Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said, who blamed the previous Conservative Party for the backlog of cases. "We inherited an asylum system in complete chaos with a soaring backlog of asylum cases and a broken appeals system with thousands of people in the system for years on end."

The proposed new body will be fully independent of government with safeguards to ensure high standards and is expected to use the expertise of independent professionally trained adjudicators focusing particularly on asylum appeals and will allow capacity to be surged so cases can be cleared.

It will have statutory powers to prioritise cases from those in asylum accommodation and foreign national offenders.

The British government is also introducing a new legal requirement for a 24-week timeframe for the First Tier Tribunal to determine asylum appeals by those receiving asylum accommodation support and appeals by foreign offenders. Further details are set to be tabled in the coming weeks. *—PTI*

The UK government has unveiled sweeping reforms to its asylum appeals process, aiming to dismantle a system mired in delays ***PHOTO: X***

Rupee falls 6 paise to close at 87.58 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The rupee pared initial gains to settle 6 paise lower at 87.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, tracking a strong American currency and a recovery in crude oil prices. Forex traders said investors were cautious ahead of the implementation of the 27 August tariff deadline and the upcoming US economic data ahead of the Federal Reserve's 17 September meeting. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened on a positive note at 87.38, then touched an early high of 87.34 and an intraday low of 87.61 against the US dollar. The domestic unit settled for the day at 87.58 (provisional), registering a decline of 6 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee fell 27 paise to close at 87.52 against the greenback.—*PTI*

Gold slips ₹200 to ₹1,00,170/10g

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Gold prices in the national capital fell by Rs 200 to Rs 1,00,170 per 10g (99.9 per cent purity) on Monday, tracking a bearish global trend and stockist selling, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined by Rs 150 to Rs 99,900 per 10g. Silver prices remained flat at Rs 1,15,000 per kg. In global markets, spot gold slipped 0.26 per cent to USD 3,363.45 per ounce, while silver dipped 0.17 per cent to USD 38.78 per ounce. Analysts noted that bullion could rebound if US job data weakens, increasing the likelihood of a Federal Reserve rate cut. Dovish comments by US Fed Chair Jerome Powell last week had briefly boosted prices, but ongoing inflation and sluggish economic activity may limit further upside.—*PTI*

Tata Digital names Sivanandan as CEO; 3rd in 2 years

MUMBAI, 25 AUG

Tata Digital has appointed Sajith Sivanandan as Chief Executive Officer, effective 1 September, marking its third leadership change in under two years. Sivanandan, a former Google and Jio executive, most recently served as President at Jio Mobile Digital Services and earlier led JioHotstar. He also spent over 15 years at Google, heading Google Pay in India and later across Asia-Pacific. His appointment comes as Tata Digital looks to stabilise after the exits of founding CEO Pratik Pal in February 2024 and successor Naveen Tahilyani in May 2025. Coinciding with the leadership change, Tata Digital will move into a new Mumbai headquarters at One International Centre, Lower Parel. —*Agencies*

India's coal import rises in June quarter

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

India's coal imports increased marginally by 1.5 per cent to 76.40 million tonnes (MT) in April-June of the current financial year, compared to 75.26 MT in the same period last year, despite efforts to boost domestic production. In June, imports rose to 23.91 MT from 22.97 MT in June 2023, according to mjunction Services Ltd, a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL. During April-June, non-coking coal imports remained steady at 49.08 MT, while coking coal imports increased from 15.45 MT to 16.37 MT. In June, non-coking coal imports were 14.85 MT (up from 14.19 MT), and coking coal imports reached 5.78 MT (from 5.45 MT). State-owned Coal India Ltd's (CIL) coal production fell by 8.5 per cent to 57.8 MT in June, from 63.1 MT the previous year. —*PTI*

FITCH RETAINS INDIA'S CREDIT RATING AT BBB-

Says direct impact of US tariffs on GDP would be modest

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Fitch Ratings on Monday affirmed India's sovereign credit rating at 'BBB–' with a stable outlook, citing robust economic growth and solid external finances. The rating, the lowest investment-grade level, reflects confidence in India's medium-term growth potential despite external challenges.

'BBB–' is the lowest rung of investment-grade ratings — a level that indicates adequate creditworthiness and a low default risk. Any rating below this would be considered "junk" grade. In comparison, 'AAA' is the highest, reserved for the most creditworthy borrowers.

The affirmation follows closely on the heels of S&P's recent upgrade of India's rating to 'BBB', its first in over 18 years, and a similar move by Morningstar DBRS in May this year.

Fitch maintained its GDP growth forecast for India at 6.5 per cent for FY26, unchanged from FY25 ***PHOTO: X***

Fitch maintained its GDP growth forecast for India at 6.5 per cent for FY26, unchanged from FY25, and significantly above the 'BBB' median of 2.5 per cent. It estimates India's medium-term growth potential at 6.4 per cent, driven by strong public infrastructure spending, improving private investment, and favourable demographics.

However, Fitch flagged a moderate downside risk to this outlook from proposed 50 per cent US tariffs on Indian goods. It also noted that while India's economic momentum has moderated over the past two years, it remains strong relative to peers.

The agency highlighted ongoing tax reform proposals, including a simplified GST structure with two main rates (5 and 18 per cent) and a higher 40 per cent rate for select goods. These, along with the government's broader deregulation agenda, could help sustain consumption and support incremental growth.

Yet, structural reforms in politically sensitive areas like land and labour remain challenging, though some states may move forward independently.

Fitch also underscored fiscal metrics as a key credit weakness, citing high deficits and debt relative to peers. Lagging structural indicators, such as governance and GDP per capita, continue to constrain India's rating. —*PTI*

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 329.06 points or 0.40 per cent to close at 81,635.91 ***PHOTO: PTI***

Mkt rallies 329pts amid fed rate cut hopes

MUMBAI, 25 AUG

The Sensex rebounded by 329 points on Monday, snapping back from Friday's losses, as strong buying in IT and auto stocks and global market optimism lifted investor sentiment. Hopes of a US Federal Reserve rate cut in September further boosted risk appetite.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 329.06 points or 0.40 per cent to close at 81,635.91, while the NSE Nifty climbed 97.65 points or 0.39 per cent to 24,967.75. During intraday trade, the Sensex touched a high of 81,799.06, up 492 points.

IT stocks led the rally, with Infosys rising 3.03 per cent, TCS up 2.85 per cent, HCL Tech 2.6 per cent, and Tech Mahindra 1.32 per cent higher. Gains in Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Titan, and Reliance Industries also supported the index.

"A wave of optimism swept through the market driven by expectations of a Fed rate cut and easing global yields," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

However, Bharat Electronics, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel, and ICICI Bank were among the laggards. Sector-wise, BSE Focused IT jumped 2.35 per cent, IT 2.34 per cent, teck 1.67 per cent, and auto 0.51 per cent. Capital goods, telecom, and financials saw mild declines.

Midcaps edged up 0.10 per cent, while smallcaps were flat. Despite positive domestic sentiment, FIIs net sold equities worth Rs 1,622.52 crore on Friday.

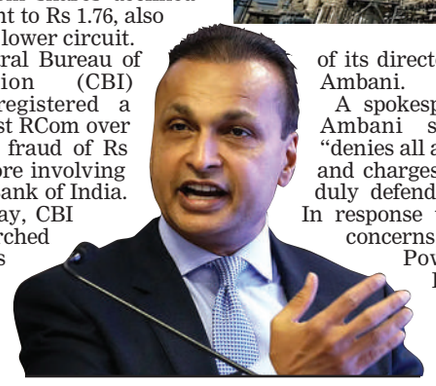
Brent crude rose 0.34 per cent to USD 67.96 a barrel. Asian markets ended higher, while Europe traded lower. US indices closed sharply higher on Friday, led by Fed rate cut optimism. —*PTI*

Reliance shares hit lower circuit amid CBI action against Anil

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Shares of Reliance Power and Reliance Infrastructure hit their lower circuit limits on Monday morning, following investor concerns sparked by recent CBI action against Reliance Communications (RCom).

Reliance Power fell 4.99 per cent to Rs 46.49 on the BSE, while Reliance Infrastructure also dropped 4.99 per cent to Rs 275.05. RCom shares declined 4.86 per cent to Rs 1.76, also hitting the lower circuit.



The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently registered a case against RCom over an alleged fraud of Rs 2,929.05 crore involving the State Bank of India. On Saturday, CBI teams searched RCom's official premises and the Mumbai residence of its director, Anil D Ambani.

A spokesperson for Ambani stated he "denies all allegations and charges, and will duly defend himself." In response to market concerns, Reliance Power and Reliance Infrastructure issued separate exchange filings clarifying that the CBI's actions have no impact on their business operations, financial performance, shareholders, employees, or any other stakeholders.

The companies emphasised they are "separate and independent listed entities" with no business or financial ties to RCom. Additionally, they noted Anil has not been on the board of Reliance Power for over 3.5 years. —*PTI*

Revenue of large firms to grow 9-11%: Crisil

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Diversified engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) firms in India are forecast to experience a modest revenue growth of 9-11 per cent in the current financial year, according to Crisil Ratings. The increase is set to be driven by steady infrastructure capital expenditure, healthy order books, and faster project execution, alongside a favourable shift in the order mix.

Crisil Ratings' study examined 15 EPC companies, which together generated Rs 3.15 lakh crore in revenue during the previous fiscal year. The outlook for these firms remains closely linked to the capital expenditure (capex) outlays of both government and private sector entities. Infrastructure capex alone accounts for approximately 75 per cent of India's total capex.

Some EPC companies have also expanded internationally to explore opportunities across diverse infrastructure sectors. For this fiscal year, the total domestic infrastructure capex is projected to grow by 7-9 per cent, supported by consistent budgetary allocations from central and state governments and a moderate rise in private sector participation.

RBI asks banks to create investments amid US tariffs

MUMBAI, 25 AUG

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said that corporates and banks need to come together to boost investments amid challenges emanating from tariff uncertainties and geopolitical concerns, stressing that the central bank has not lost sight of growth objectives.

Speaking at the Fibac conference, Malhotra highlighted ongoing US-India trade talks and expressed hope that they would minimise the impact of recent US tariffs, particularly on Indian textiles and shrimp exports. He assured targeted support for sectors most affected.

Malhotra noted that monetary policy would balance both inflation and growth. "There is no tussle between financial stability and growth," he said, calling for an investment push while corporate and bank balance sheets remain strong. He also revealed that RBI is reviewing measures to boost bank credit across sectors, following a credit growth dip to a three-year low in FY25.

SBI Chairman CS Setty, representing the IBA, noted waning corporate credit demand due to shifts towards private credit and capital markets. He called for easing restrictions on acquisition finance for top firms.

RBI is also working to ease regulatory burden, streamline board responsibilities, and lower intermediation costs. While acknowledging concerns about excessive data requests, Malhotra sought cooperation, stressing that richer data would lead to better regulation. Key reforms are in the pipeline, including Basel-III implementation and new credit loss norms. —*PTI*

OYO eyes $7–8B valuation, DRHP filing likely in Nov

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

Hospitality tech firm OYO is preparing to file its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) in November, targeting a $7–8 billion IPO valuation, sources revealed. The company is expected to seek board approval for the proposal next week.

While a company spokesperson declined to confirm timelines, stating the decision lies solely with OYO's Board of Directors, they added that the firm continues to evaluate strategic options to enhance stakeholder value.

According to sources, discussions with key banking partners—Axis, Citi, Goldman Sachs, ICICI, JM Financial, and Jefferies—have intensified in recent weeks. The current valuation guidance stands at $7–8 billion (approximately Rs 70 per share), equating to 25–30 times EBITDA. —*PTI*

SBI asks RBI to let banks fund acquisitions

MUMBAI, 25 AUG

The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) will formally request the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to permit banks to finance mergers and acquisitions (M&A) of listed companies, State Bank of India Chairman and IBA chief C.S. Setty said on Monday.

Speaking at FIBAC 2025, organised by FICCI and IBA, Setty said the restriction on bank funding for M&As stems from concerns around hostile takeovers. However, he argued that acquisitions of listed companies are more transparent and shareholder-approved, thus minimising such risks.

"To begin with, we will make a formal request to RBI to allow funding for M&As of listed companies. Shareholder transparency in these cases reduces the chances of hostile takeovers," Setty said.

He also urged the private sector to initiate investments in capacity expansion, highlighting that the government has already taken steps to boost consumption through GST rationalisation and income tax exemptions up to Rs 12 lakh.

"It's important for corporates to act now. When demand picks up, we shouldn't be caught unprepared on the capacity front," he added.

Setty noted that current corporate capex is primarily being financed through internal accruals, equity, and debt markets. Banks, he assured, stand ready to support future investments. On the broader banking landscape, Setty said the sector is focused on enhancing customer service, cybersecurity, and financial inclusion. —*PTI*

Centre fixes Rs 67,220/tonne price on multi-layer paper

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

The government has announced new measures affecting imports and exports of key commodities. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has set a minimum import price (MIP) of Rs 67,220 per tonne on virgin multi-layer paper board until 31 March 2026

The product, used in packaging for pharmaceuticals, FMCG, food and beverages, electronics, cosmetics, liquor, and publishing, will not be permitted for import below this price.

The move aims to curb dumping from countries like Indonesia

In addition, the government has reduced the minimum export price (MEP) for natural honey from USD 2,000 to USD 1,400 per tonne, effective immediately until 31 December 2025.

Exports below this price are not permitted. —*PTI*

AS WESTERN FUNDS DROPS

India key to fighting global hunger: WFP

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

As the UN World Food Programme (WFP) faces a devastating 40 per cent funding cut, India's evolution from food-scarce nation to global food supplier is proving critical in the fight against global hunger, WFP Deputy Executive Director Carl Skau said on Monday.

In an exclusive interview, Skau emphasised that cooperation with emerging powers like India is essential as traditional donors, including the US, EU, UK, and Germany, reduce contributions. "India's homegrown solutions, such as grain ATMs and rice fortification, are more relevant to crisis-hit regions than Western models," he said.

WFP plans to sign a memorandum of understanding to procure fortified rice from India, enabling faster and more efficient crisis response. India's expertise in smart warehousing and supply chain optimisation has already delivered $30 million in savings, being applied in Ethiopia, Sudan, and beyond.

Skau praised India's global influence, particularly in diplomacy, G20 forums, and bilateral relations. WFP also seeks India's help in securing humanitarian access to conflict zones like Gaza, Myanmar, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

In Gaza, famine has been declared in parts of the territory. WFP assists one million people monthly but lacks sufficient access, with only 100 trucks entering daily out of 300–400 needed.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India's food policies, including the National Food Security Act and Mid-Day Meal Scheme, are serving as models for countries like Haiti and Sudan. WFP aims to establish a "centre of excellence" in India to share its expertise.

Skau warned that inaction could derail the UN's Zero Hunger Goal by 2030, making India's partnership more vital than ever. —*PTI*

OpenAI starts India-first education initiative

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

OpenAI on Monday unveiled its India-first "Learning Accelerator" initiative aimed at empowering educators with AI tools and training. The programme includes a major research collaboration with IIT Madras, backed by USD 500,000 in funding.

India, home to the world's largest number of student users on ChatGPT, will be the first to benefit from this education-focused AI drive. IIT Madras will lead long-term studies on improving learning outcomes and teaching methods using AI, with insights shared publicly to inform future product development.

OpenAI has appointed Raghav Gupta as Head of Education for India and Asia Pacific. Gupta, former Coursera MD, will lead efforts to expand AI access and literacy in the region.

PHOTO: AI

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, AICTE, and ARISE schools, OpenAI will distribute 5,00,000 ChatGPT licences and training to educators and students across India over six months. The MoE partnership supports teachers in government schools (Classes 1–12), while AICTE will focus on technical institutes. ARISE schools will see ChatGPT integration in K–12 teaching.

The initiative follows recent India-centric launches, including ChatGPT Go at Rs 399/month, UPI payment support, and OpenAI Academy. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Aditi Ashok finishes 36th at CPKC Open on LPGA

MISSISSAUGA, 25 AUG

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok finished tied 36th after carding an even-par 71 for the third time in four days at the CPKC Women's Open here. She totalled two under for the week. Canadian Brooke Henderson won her second CPKC Women's Open title, beating playing partner Minjee Lee by a stroke for her first victory in more than two and a half years. Henderson closed with a four-under 68 at Mississaugua Golf and Country Club to finish at 15-under 269. Lee, the Australian player ranked fourth in the world, had a 68. Henderson broke a tie for the lead with a six-foot birdie putt on the par-three 14th hole on the tree-lined layout. On the short par-four 17th, she followed Lee's 13-foot birdie putt with a 12-footer of her own to keep the lead. Mao Saigo of Japan was third at 11-under after a 66.—*PTI*

Eala's historic Grand Slam win for Philippines

NEW YORK, 25 AUG

Alexandra Eala became the first woman representing the Philippines to win a Grand Slam match, doing so at the US Open by defeating No. 14 seed Clara Tauson 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (13-11) after coming back from a 5-1 deficit in the third set and getting some help from a key video review decision that flustered Tauson. "I was playing really badly, anyway. But it definitely didn't help," Tauson told The Associated Press on Sunday. "But that's how life is." Eala is a 20-year-old who is ranked 75th and trains at the Rafael Nadal Academy. This was her fourth win against a top-20 opponent in 2025, including against Iga Swiatek in March en route to the Miami Open semifinals.—*PTI*

Dane revokes int'l retirement ahead of ODI WC 2025

DUBAI, 25 AUG

Former Proteas captain Dane van Niekerk revoked her retirement from international cricket and 'sincerely apologised to Cricket South Africa' in a social media post on Monday. "I'm thrilled to announce that I have decided to revoke my retirement from international cricket. The time away has reminded me just how much I have missed representing my country, and I am fully committed to giving everything to once again have that opportunity," she wrote. "I sincerely apologise to Cricket South Africa and the cricket family for how I handled my retirement, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to hopefully one day express my skills again.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@WESTON

Juventus condemns racist abuse of Weston

TURIN, 25 AUG

US midfielder Weston McKennie was subjected to racist abuse after Juventus completed a 2-0 season-opening win over Parma in the Serie A, the Italian club said. Juventus posted a statement on social media saying McKennie was the target of "discriminatory, racist remarks by individuals in the away section" while he was warming down with teammates on the pitch on Sunday. "Juventus strongly condemns this incident and any form of racism, and will ensure full cooperation with the sporting justice authorities to identify those responsible," Juventus said in the statement.—*PTI*

BCCI is looking for new sponsor after Dream11 walks out

ICA introduces one-time benefit for deceased members' spouses

NEW DELHI, 25 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Fantasy sports company Dream11 is no longer the title sponsor of the Indian cricket team, and the Board has initiated the process to find a replacement, which is unlikely to be finalised in time for next month's Asia Cup.

As reported by the PTI on Sunday, Dream11 won't be continuing as the Indian cricket team's title sponsors, starting from the men's Asia Cup, after the government banned real money gaming under the recently passed 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming' act.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia confirmed that the deal with Dream11 has ended and BCCI is putting the process in motion to get a new title sponsor for various national teams.

"Our stand is very clear. With government regulations in place, the BCCI cannot continue its sponsorship relationship with Dream11 or any such other gaming company. Under the new restrictions, there is no scope, and we are facing a roadblock with Dream11," Saikia told PTI on Monday.

The ban on real money gaming has affected the revenue stream of all fantasy gaming companies. "...no person shall offer any aid, abet, induce, indulge, engage in offering online money gaming services, nor shall be involved in any advertisement which directly or indirectly promotes any person to play any online money game," the act states. The legislation also makes it clear that there could be a financial penalty of up to Rs one crore or a jail term of three years in case of a violation. Dream11 won the tender for Indian national teams (Senior Men, women, Emerging (U23), U-19 men and women) in 2023 for a period of three years for Rs 358 crore (USD 44 million). "The BCCI fully understands one of our sponsorship partners' plight. It is not their fault, and unlike other issues of payment default, there won't be any penalty levied on Dream11. This is a government rule and full compliance is required, and in the current scenario, their business will be impacted," a top official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

With Dream11's exit, another company, My11Circle, will also find it tough to remain the fantasy sports partner of the Indian Premier League. My11Circle has pledged Rs 625 crore for a period of five years (Rs 125 crore annually).

The Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA) will introduce a one-time benefit (OTB) of Rs 1 lakh for the spouses of deceased members after the BCCI approves its disbursal.The initiative aims to provide financial assistance and honour the contributions of members' families during their time of loss."The benefit will apply to only spouses of deceased ICAmembers, except International Test Cricketers. The Board has approved a lump sum amount of Rs. 1,00,000 (One Lakh Rupees) to be disbursed to eligible spouses upon approval," a media release stated.The initiative underscores ICA's commitment to supporting the families of cricketers beyond their active careers and in times of need.Around 50 beneficiaries are expected to benefit initially, ensuring immediate support to families in need.This benefit will be periodically reviewed and may be adjusted subject to the Board's assessment and ifthe BCCI approves a pension scheme for widows and widowers in the future. —*PTI*

COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mirabai wins gold on return to action

NEW YORK, 25 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu lived up to her top billing with a record-breaking show as she expectedly won a gold medal at the Common wealth Championships here on Monday.

The Tokyo Olympics silver medallist lifted a total of 193kg (84kg+109kg) to set new Common wealth Championship records in snatch, clean and jerk, and total, finishing atop the women's 48kg podium.

Her effort was a whopping 14kg more than the previous total record in the tournament. National Games champion Rishikanta Singh added the second gold of the day in the men's 60kg with a total effort of 271kg (120kg+151kg).

Returning to international action after a year-long hiatus due to an injury, Chanu did look rusty at times, managing only three successful lifts out of six. "I am truly delighted to win the gold medal here because this is my first international event after the Olympics and in the 48kg category. I had doubts if I would be able to give the same performance I did in this weight," Chanu said. "This victory is a great confidence boost as I prepare for the World Championships in October, and I'll continue to give my best to make India proud on the international stage," she added.The 31-year-old faltered on her opening snatch attempt of 84kg as the judges were unhappy with her left elbow. But she cleared the same weight in her second attempt, shattering the 80kg snatch record.Her third try of 89kg also ended in a failed lift as she showed signs of discomfort in her right knee.

"I was not aware that the first lift had been deemed no-lift. But I think there was an issue with the left hand, so that could be the reason," Chanu said

With no real competition to push her, Chanu was essentially competing with herself. She opened with a 105kg lift in clean and jerk, which was 5kg more than the previous tournament record. She improved that to 109kg, matching her 2017 World Championship-winning effort. However, she could not complete her final attempt of 113kg.Soumya Dalvi won the gold in the junior category. —*PTI*

Sana to lead Pakistan in Women's World Cup

LAHORE, 25 AUG

Uncapped batter Eyman Fatima, who recently made her international debut in the T20Is in Ireland, was on Monday included in the 15-member Pakistan squad to be led by Fatima Sana in the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

Eyman, a right-handed batter, had impressed in Pakistan's National T20 tournament in May.

Apart from Eyman, six other players -- Natalia Parvaiz (8 ODIs, 24T20Is), Rameen Shamim (8 ODIs, 11 T20Is), Sadaf Shamas (15 ODIs, 12 T20Is), Sadia Iqbal (27 ODIs, 50 T20Is), Shawaal Zulfiqar (3 ODIs, 9 T20Is), and Syeda Aroob Shah (2 ODIs, 15 T20Is) -- are set for their maiden ODI World Cup appearances. The 21-year-old Aroob, 20-year-old Shawaal, and 20-year-old Eyman had featured for Pakistan in the inaugural edition of the ICC Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup in 2023.

Pakistan Squad: Fatima Sana (c), Muneeba Ali (vc), Aliya, Diana Baig, Eyman Fatima, Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaima Sohail, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra, Sidra Nawaz, Syeda Aroob.—*PTI*

Rohit calls Test cricket challenging and draining

MUMBAI, 25 AUG

Reflecting on some aspects of his Test career that he decided to end earlier this year, former India captain Rohit Sharma on Monday said the format is both "challenging and draining" but he learnt to cope with its demands by focusing on preparation.

The 38-year-old, who averaged a decent 40.58 for his 4301 runs in 67 Tests, retired from the five-day game in May a year after calling it quits from T20 Internationals, having led India to the World Cup title in the format.

On Monday, he looked back at some of that time during a CEAT event while speaking on preparations for big moments during a panel discussion.

"It is something that you prepare for, because the game demands longevity," he said. "Especially in the Test format, you have to last for five days. Mentally, it is very challenging, and it is draining as well. "When we start playing cricket at a competitive level, even in Mumbai, club cricket (matches) go on for two days or three days, so we are built like that, and it starts at a very young age for us.

Rohit said not all young players understand the importance of preparing well at the start of their careers, but they learn the significance of it gradually. "When you are very young, you don't understand the importance of preparation.

But as you go along, you understand, it gives you a kind of discipline that the game asks for, so it starts with preparation, understanding what exactly you need to do," he said. —*PTI*

Rohit Sharma
PHOTO: PTI

WINS HIS FIRST MATCH

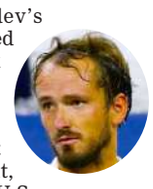
Djokovic improves to 19-0 in the first round of US Open

NEW YORK, 25 AUG

Novak Djokovic looked tired. He looked hurt. And at times, he just looked old.

Djokovic overcame all that and improved to 19-0 in the first round of the U.S. Open Sunday night, battling through some leg troubles to beat Learner Tien 6-1, 7-6 (3), 6-2. But the 38-year-old acknowledged concern after laboring through the middle of his first match since Wimbledon. "I don't know. I don't have any injuries or anything. I just struggled a lot to stay in long exchanges and recover after points," Djokovic said.

Medvedev's match delayed by booing fans



Daniil Medvedev's match was delayed more than six minutes between points, after a photographer entered the court on match point, and the 2021 U.S. Open champion became enraged by the chair umpire's decision to award his opponent a first serve.Then won the next two sets to force a deciding fifth before Benjamin eliminated him from a second straight major with a 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 0-6, 6-4 victory that ended early Monday."I tried to stay calm in the match, but it was not easy," Bonzi said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SINQUEFIELD CUP: GUKESH DRAWS WITH SAMUEL SEVIAN

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

World champion D Gukesh was held to a draw by the lone wild card Samuel Sevian of the United States, while fellow Indian R Praggnanandhaa also split the point with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in the third round of the Sinquefield Cup here.

With his second draw in as many days, Praggnanadhaa remained in the leading group of three players that now includes Fabiano Caruana of the United States, besides the overnight co-leader, Armenian-turned-American Levon Aronian.

With six rounds still to come in the 3,75,000 USD prize money tournament, Praggnanadhaa, Aronian, and Caruana share the lead on two points each, and they are now followed by Wesley, Firouzja, Vachier-Lagrave. —*PTI*

Even at 41 no better player in India than Sunil: Jamil

BENGALURU, 25 AUG

Even at 41, there is no better player in the country than talisman Sunil Chhetri in terms of quality, and he will be in the national team as long as he is available, new India head coach Khalid Jamil said on Monday.

Chhetri was left out by Jamil from the national camp for the CAFA Nations Cup beginning August 29, saying it was just a preparatory tournament for the crucial Asian Cup qualifiers matches in October. He made it clear that Chhetri will walk into the national team against Singapore on October 9 (away) and October 14 (home). "There is no better quality player in India than him. So, when he is available, why not? We need his experience. He is a legend, and he has given so much to the nation for so many years," Jamil told PTI from Bengaluru, where he addressed his first press conference as India head coach. Chhetri took international retirement after playing against Kuwait in June last year, but made a comeback for national duty in the match against Maldives in March this year following a request from then head coach Manolo Marquez to help the team in the Asian Cup qualifiers third round.

AIFF Chief Chaubey Backs Khalid

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey backs Khalid Jamil as India's new coach for CAFA Nations Cup amid ISL uncertainty. AFC rejects Sree Kanteerava Stadium for Asian Cup 2027 qualifier. Will rejuvenate the team's fortunes after a series of disappointing results in recent years. Chaubey is inclined to give Jamil time to demonstrate his capabilities. —*PTI*

Indian men's football team head coach Khalid Jamil, alongside AIFF president Shri Kalyan Chaubey, vice president Shri NA Haris PHOTO: AIFF

Manu finishes fourth in women's 25m pistol event

SHYMKENT, 25 AUG

Double Olympic medallist Indian shooter Manu Bhaker finished fourth in the women's 25m pistol competition at the Asian Shooting Championship here on Monday.

Bhaker's compatriot Esha Singh ended sixth in the eight-woman final with 18 points. Bhaker shot 25, four less than Vietnam's bronze medallist Thu Vinh Trinh (29). Chinese shooters Yueyue Zhang and Jiaruixuan Xiao won the gold and silver medals, respectively, the former prevailing 4-3 in the shoot-off after both were locked at 39 points.

The Indian trio of Bhaker, Esha, and Simranpreet Kaur Brar won the team bronze with an aggregate score of 1749, finishing behind China and South Korea. Esha topped the women's 25m pistol qualifications, finishing ahead of Bhaker and the two Chinese medallists Xiao and Zhang.

Bhaker, who won bronze medals in both the women's 10m air pistol individual and team events earlier in the tournament, was fourth in the women's 25m pistol qualification round after the precision stage, and Esha was second. —*PTI*

Manu Bhaker
PHOTO: PTI

LA LIGA 2025-26

Real too strong for Oviedo as Mbappe strikes

LONDON, 25 AUG

Kylian Mbappe scored twice as Real Madrid maintained its perfect start to the season with a 3-0 win away to newly promoted Oviedo.

The home side pushed Madrid hard in front of a packed Carlos Tartiere Stadium but was undone by a controversial call and missed chances at key moments.Mbappe put Real ahead in the 37th minute after Aurelien Tchouameni won the ball off Leander Dendoncker in midfield and quickly fed Arda Guler, who slipped a pass to the Frenchman, who turned sharply on the edge of the box and drilled a low shot into the net. The goal drew loud boos from the home crowd, who were convinced Tchouameni's challenge had been a foul.

Kylian Mbappe bagged a brace to earn Real their second win in two La Liga matches
PHOTO: X/@ @LALIGA

The first meeting between the sides since November 2002 proved a hard-fought contest, with Oviedo's disciplined defending limiting Real to just a single goal for most of the match.

The resilient host nearly snatched an equaliser when Kwasi Sibo's low drive struck the post and bounced out. Instead, it was Real, which struck in the 83rd minute, regaining possession once again in midfield. Substitute Vinicius slipped the ball through to Mbappe, who finished coolly to double the lead. Minutes after his goal, Mbappe had a chance for a hat-trick, but Oviedo keeper Aaron Escandell brilliantly saved his powerful shot from distance. —*PTI*